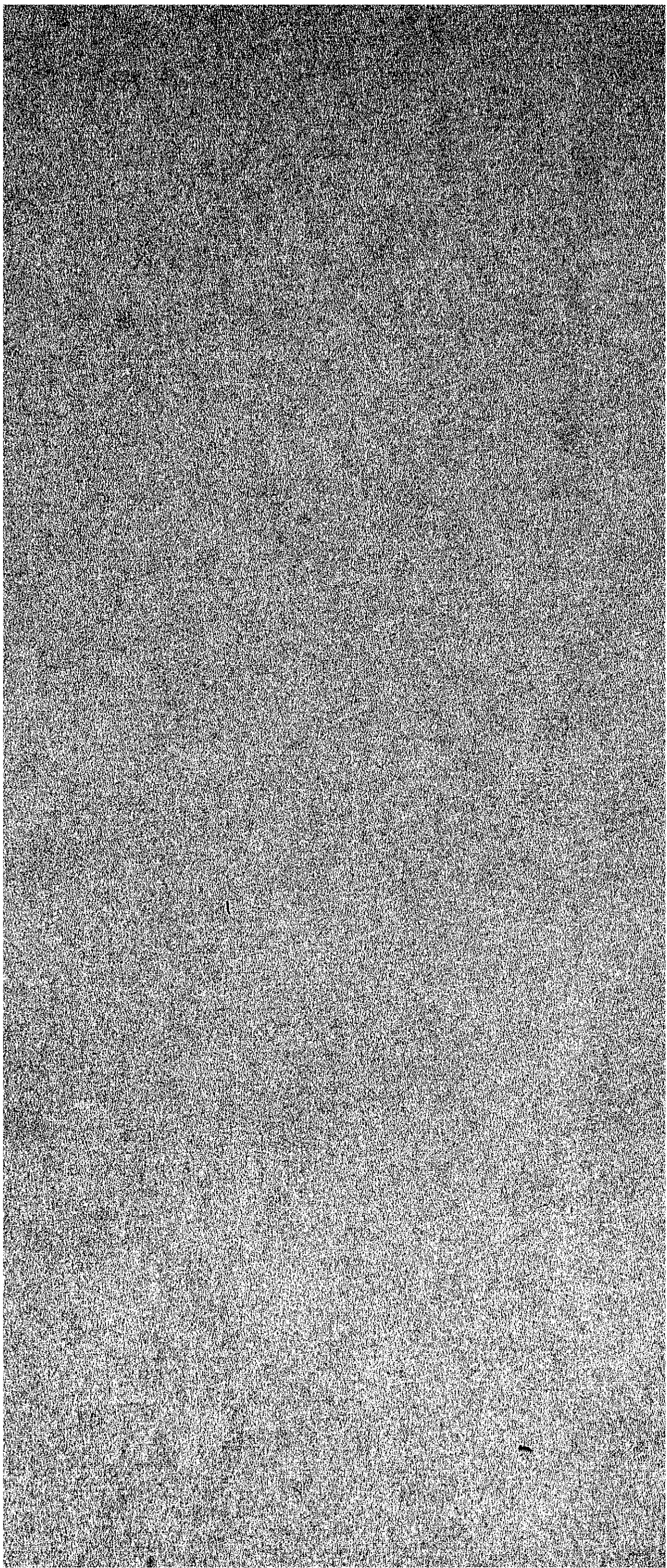


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CONTENTS

Southern Congressmen and the American Naval Revolution, 1880-1898 <i>by Thomas H. Coode</i>	Page 89
The Cycle of Military and Economic Interests: A Theory of Confederate Defeat <i>by T. L. Connelly</i>	Page 111
The Confederate States Navy at Mobile, 1861 to August, 1864 <i>by William N. Still, Jr.</i>	Page 127
The Life of Ryland Randolph As Seen Through his Letter to John W. DuBose <i>by Sarah Woolfolk Wiggins</i>	Page 145
Violence: An Instrument of Policy in Reconstruction Alabama <i>by Ray Granade</i>	Page 181
Daniel R. Hundley's Contribution to Folklore <i>by Tommy W. Rogers</i>	Page 203
Slavery in the 1850's: The Recollections of an Alabama Unionist <i>by Walter F. Peterson</i>	Page 219

Milo B. Howard, Jr., Editor

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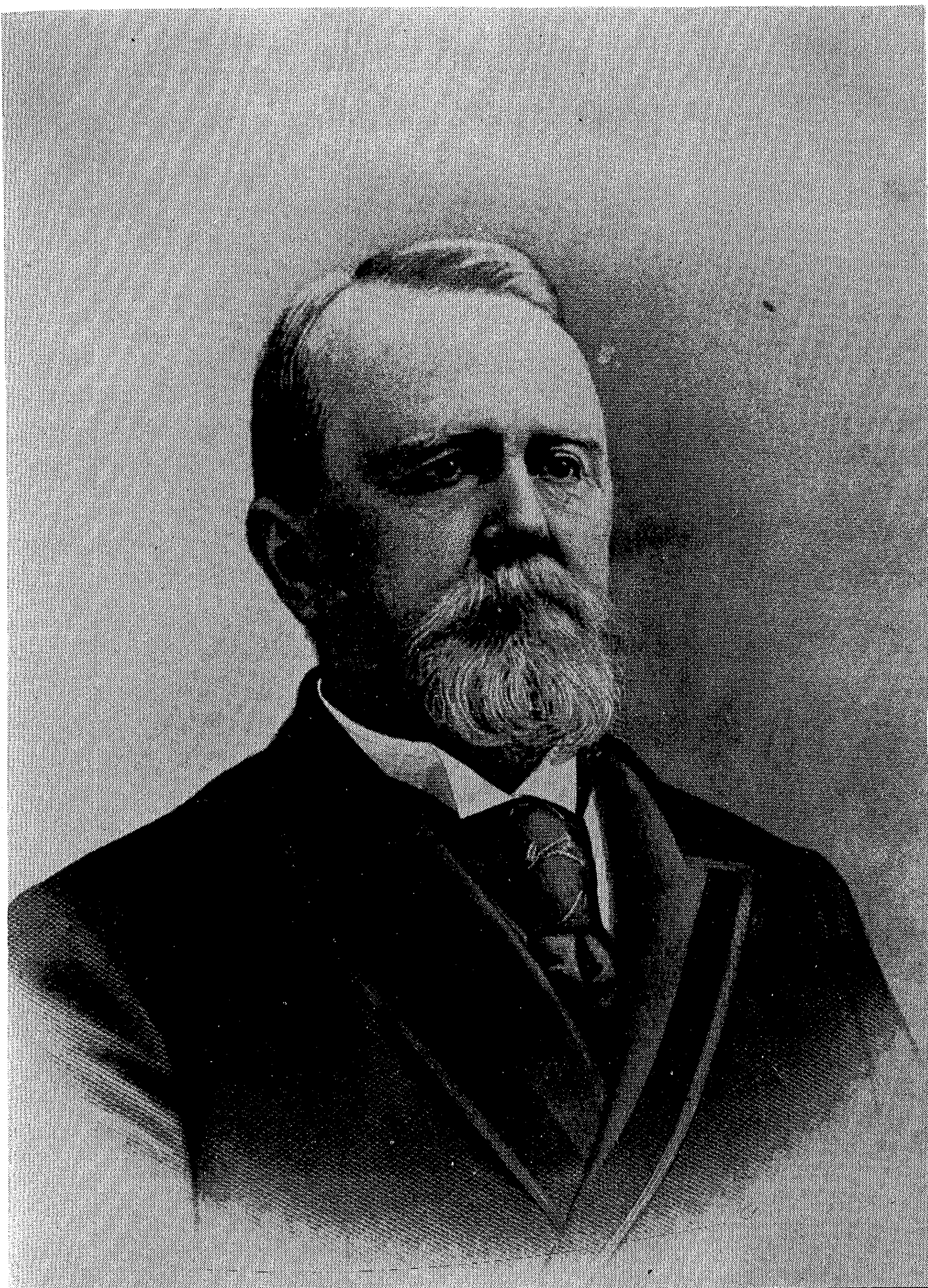
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HILARY A. HERBERT
Secretary of the Navy, 1893-1897

SOUTHERN CONGRESSMEN AND THE AMERICAN NAVAL REVOLUTION, 1880-1898

By

Thomas H. Coode

As the decade of the 1880's began, the war potential of the American navy was virtually non-existent. Due primarily to the nation's desire to turn away from military affairs after the Civil War the navy, as an effective fighting force, went into dry-dock. Of the nearly two thousand vessels that the navy possessed—most of them old and obsolete monitors of Civil War vintage—less than half a hundred could fire a gun.¹ One historian claims that “by 1880 the great American navy of the Civil War had decayed into a flotilla of deathtraps and defenseless antiques.”² A Congressman described the navy as an “alphabet of floating washtubs,”³ while another remarked in the middle of the decade that the navy was so weak it could not even “run away from a fight,” much less win one.⁴ According to the senior Admiral of the fleet the navy in 1880 had dropped to twelfth rank in iron-clad strength among the navies of the world.⁵

Rather than with concern over the weakened condition of the navy Congress was preoccupied with Reconstruction and retrenchment policies. Personal issues dominated politics, and Congressmen were much more interested in *Credit Mobilier* stock than naval increases. Further, Congressmen believed that

¹ Donald W. Mitchell, *History of the Modern American Navy* (New York, 1946), 7-8. Although Congress had authorized the construction of a handful of new sloops in 1873, these were small, slow, and had inferior armament.

² Walter La Feber, *The New Empire* (Ithaca, New York, 1963), 58.

³ Quoted in Robert Seager II, “Ten Years Before Mahan: The Unofficial Case for the New Navy, 1880-1890,” *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, XL (December, 1953), 497.

⁴ *Congressional Record*, 49th Congress, 1st Session, 7475.

⁵ Walter R. Herrick, Jr., *The American Naval Revolution* (Baton Rouge, Louisiana, 1966), 20.

the lack of any external threat to the United States rendered unnecessary a large military establishment.⁶

However, a number of developments in the 1880's led Congressmen who supported naval expansion to believe that a new era of naval growth was at hand. For one thing, the Republicans recaptured Congress in 1880. While many Congressional leaders of both major parties supported naval expansion, Republicans were generally more enthusiastic, perhaps because of their close affiliation with industrial leaders. A number of Democrats, especially from the South, remained committed to the small navy tradition of the Jeffersonian and Jacksonian periods.⁷

There were other factors which led to the naval renaissance of the 1880's. The country had recovered from the Panic of 1873 and the treasury showed a surplus of \$100,000.000.⁸ Also, many Congressmen believed that the aggressive foreign policy now demanded by the American people necessitated new and larger warships.⁹ In addition, the tremendous increase in exports during the 1870's revealed that the United States was involved in the race for international commercial supremacy, and at least a few Congressmen believed—even before Alfred Thayer Mahan emerged as the foremost exponent of a combined commercial and naval power—that sea power would play a decisive role in commercial competition. One such Congressman was Washington Whitthorne of Tennessee. In 1880, Whitthorne succinctly stated the case to his colleagues:

“I assume, somewhat axiomatically, that civilization is the elevation and improvement of the human race, and that

⁶ Among the many obstacles to naval reform was the tendency in Congressional circles to let European admiralities experiment in naval technology and architecture, while America waited until these techniques reached perfection. In July, 1882, Congressman John D. C. Atkins of Tennessee, a friend of the navy, offered a typical example of this thinking: “Let us wait, sir, until naval invention and naval construction shall have reached that perfection which will present a model that we may safely adapt.” *Congressional Record*, 47th Congress, 1st Session, 5651.

⁷ Harold and Margaret Sprout, *The Rise of American Naval Power* (Princeton, N. J., 1946), 190-191.

⁸ Herrick, *American Naval Revolution*. 24.

⁹ David Pletcher, *The Awkward Years: American Foreign Relations Under Garfield and Arthur* (Columbia, Mo., 1963), 116.

commerce is the great agent of civilization. . . . I assume again that the wealth, progress, and improvement of a nation or people is evidenced to a large degree by its merchant marine or commerce, and the health and wealth of the commerce of any country are supported first by its resources in production, and secondly by the means given for its defense and protection. It is singular to note what is the seeming lesson in the history of those nations which have attained the highest rank in dominion, power and civilization that have flourished most . . . when they had powerful navies and commercial marine. . . . Pause for a moment and grasp the rank and power of civilized nations of today; and in doing so you, with but an exception or two, fix the rank and power of their navies and commercial marine."¹⁰

The Naval historians Harold and Margaret Sprout have written that "the year 1881 was an historic milestone in the rise of American navel power."¹¹ In that year Secretary of the Navy William H. Hunt¹² established a Naval Advisory Board to study naval needs and to recommend the construction of new ships. The Secretary met with leaders of both parties in Congress, brought the Admiral of the Navy together with the House Committee on Naval Affairs, and personally contacted many Congressmen, urging their support for his expansionist program.¹³ Hunt's effort was richly rewarded, for by the mid-1890's the new navy had come into being, and helped to reveal in 1898 an expansionist sentiment which had been gathering strength for decades.¹⁴

¹⁰ *Congressional Record*, 46th Congress, 2nd Session, *Appendix*, 142-143. Although Whitthorne is often mentioned by naval and diplomatic historians as an early and ardent advocate of the new navy, he opposed many appropriations because he feared extravagance and waste in any Navy Department administered by Republicans.

¹¹ Sprout, *American Naval Power*, 183.

¹² Selected chiefly because President Garfield wanted the South represented in his Cabinet, Hunt has been called the "Father of the New Navy." Thomas Hunt, *Life of William H. Hunt*, (Brattleboro, Vt., 1922), 216.

¹³ George T. Davis, *A Navy Second to None* (New York, 1940), 37.

¹⁴ One enthusiastic student of the period has written that in 1881 the Arthur Administration "opened a new chapter in the history of American militarism." Pletcher, *The Awkward Years*, 116.

What part did Southern Congressmen play in this naval resurgence? Some writers have suggested that the Southerners supported the naval buildup. In his history of the modern American navy George T. Davis has written that during the first Cleveland Administration Congressmen from the South "came forward as ardent champions of naval power." Davis has suggested that it was an effort on their part to re-establish loyalty to the nation, as well as to ignite new steel furnaces throughout the South.¹⁵ Secretary of the Navy Hilary Herbert credited the new navy to the "joint efforts of those who had supported the Confederacy and those who helped to maintain the Union."¹⁶

A number of Southern Congressmen did support increased naval funds; they sought dry-docks for the Gulf of Mexico, and advocated the construction of new vessels in Southern shipyards. But the larger question is whether Southern Congressmen in general activity supported naval expansion. Did they support the construction of cruisers and monitors in the 1880's and more importantly, did they support the building of the new battleship navy of the 1890's? Did they favor commercial expansion abroad, and agree that its protection necessitated a sea-going navy as Mahan and others proclaimed? This paper will attempt to answer these questions.

After Secretary Hunt's ambitious start in 1881, the Navy Department and the House Committee on Naval Affairs the next year requested a substantial increase in naval funds, which included authorization for the construction of four new steel cruisers. Not accustomed to such requests in recent years, the House debated the proposal at length. Some Southern members were convinced that crucial commercial and political factors demanded increased naval funds, and a few of them accurately predicted the role the navy would play in the commercial expansion of the future. For example, Representative E. John Ellis of Louisiana believed that without a navy "worthy of the

¹⁵ Davis, *Navy Second to None*, 46.

¹⁶ Hilary A. Herbert, "Grandfather's Talks about his Life Under Two Flags," in Hilary A. Herbert Papers, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina Library, Chapel Hill, North Carolina. 356. Hereinafter cited as Herbert Papers.

name," the United States could never obtain the commercial supremacy it sought. Ellis even suggested the possible result of our commercial expansion by admitting that the physical conquest of the Caribbean by Americans might some day alarm the people there enough to require the military protection of our interests.¹⁷ Representative John D. C. Atkins of Tennessee echoed Ellis' observation that new commercial needs called for larger naval appropriations than in the past. Representative John F. Dezendorf of Virginia was willing to approve any naval increase which would aid commercial expansion.¹⁸

Proponents of naval expansion in Congress used other arguments to support their cause. One was the so-called "Chilean myth." Due to diplomatic difficulties between the United States and its small Southern neighbor, many Congressmen in the eighties and early nineties believed that Chile was on the brink of war and its navy would one day face America's fleet.¹⁹ Convinced that the latter would emerge second best in such an encounter, they feared for the safety of our port cities, and brilliantly portrayed the tragic consequences of a foreign seige. Dezendorf insisted that San Francisco was at the mercy of not only Chile's navy, but also many others which could levy tribute on her citizens, or burn the city to the ground.²⁰ Ellis declared that our entire navy could not stand up to one of Chile's warships and charged that a single ship from any one of nine different navies in the world could destroy our entire fleet in three or four hours.

However, some Southern Congressmen disagreed. Representative James H. Blount of Georgia commented that it was amusing that this pitiful argument was seriously used on his colleagues: "It is ludicrous to attempt to extort an appropriation to build up a navy to compete with the great navies of the earth by the possibility of a war with Chile."²¹

While most of the supporters of the new navy did not wish

¹⁷ *Congressional Record*, 47th Congress, 1st Session, 5651-5652.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 5473-5454.

¹⁹ "Grandfather's Talks," 310-311, Herbert Papers.

²⁰ *Congressional Record*, 47th Congress, 1st Session, 5473-5474.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 5651-5652.

to compete with the largest navies afloat,²² some Southern Congressmen believed they did. Representative Emory Speer of Georgia saw no need for a large navy, but called instead for a few swift vessels which would constitute a "terror to the great commercial nations of the earth." Speer cited historical accounts of our small but efficient navy during the War of 1812, and concluded that the same kind of navy would suffice for the 1880's as well.²³

After a personal plea by Representative George A. Robeson, former Secretary of the Navy, the House passed the naval appropriations bill.²⁴ While it was the first important increase in several years, it authorized only two steel cruisers. Yet, of the 119 affirmative votes cast, only thirteen came from the old Confederacy.²⁵ Perhaps economic interests more than anything else motivated the Southerners who supported the bill. Four of them were from South Carolina, a state which could possibly gain from increased naval activity. The only North Carolinian to vote for the funds lived in New Bern, which was part of an eastern coastline district. Dezendorf and Ellis, two outspoken naval adherents, represented Norfolk and New Orleans, respectively. Most of their speeches stressed a need for shipbuilding as an internal economic impetus, and each eagerly suggested Norfolk and New Orleans as ideal locales. Thus, while a few Southern Congressmen spoke loudly and at length for the new navy, an overwhelming majority of their Dixie colleagues failed to heed their call.²⁶

On March 3, 1883, the modern navy began to take shape when Congress authorized three new steel cruisers and a dis-

²² Congressman Whitthorne wanted a navy "which shall correspond or equal in speed, armor, and armament the navies of the world." *Ibid.*, 46th Congress, 3rd Session, 792.

²³ *Ibid.*, 47th Congress, 1st Session, 5655.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 5699.

²⁵ On an unsuccessful motion to re-commit the measure only eight Southerners voted for the navy. *Ibid.*, 5691.

²⁶ The final bill was a mixture of victory and defeat for naval adherents. Congress made no appropriations for the cruisers and they were never built. However, Congress did end the era of patch and repair; the act of 1882 quickened the retirement of obsolete ships by prohibiting repairs when the cost of such repairs exceeded thirty percent of the estimated cost of a new ship of similar dimensions. This repair provision meant that additional funds would be available later for the construction of new ships.

patch boat which came to be called the *A B C D* 's of the White Squadron.²⁷ Although these authorizations constituted the most important naval proposal in years, very few Southerners debated the measure from either side of the issue.²⁸ Once again Congressman Blount of Georgia led the Southern representatives who opposed a naval increase.²⁹ But more Southerners spoke in support of the new ships than against them. Besides Dezen-dorf, Congressmen Whitthorne of Tennessee and Speer of Georgia along with Hilary Herbert and Joseph W. Wheeler, Confederate veterans from Alabama, joined Republicans in support of the ships.³⁰ Nevertheless, although 103 Congressmen endorsed this significant step, only seventeen of them were Southerners, once again indicating lack of interest in the emerging navy.³¹

After the burst of energy revealed in the *ABCD* legislation, the House of Representatives voted no more ships for two years. Perhaps one reason for the absence of new construction was that the 49th Congress, which convened in December, 1883, had a Democratic majority in the House, while the Republicans maintained control of the Senate. Although friends of the navy such as Charles A. Boutelle, Republican of Maine, and Herbert of Alabama, remained in the lower chamber,³² the Democratic Chairman of the House Naval Affairs Committee, S.S. "Sunset" Cox of New York, lacked the interest and enthusiasm of his im-

²⁷ These included the *Atlanta*, *Boston*, *Chicago*, and the *Dolphin*. *U. S. Navy Yearbook*, 1922, 15. This is the 1922 edition of the reference book published each year up to that time. It consists of a description of all naval appropriation bills and all acts authorizing new construction from 1883 to 1921. Hereafter cited as *Navy Yearbook*, 1922.

²⁸ Californians joined the naval bandwagon in 1883, reminding Congress that San Francisco was a vital commercial port, and needed substantially more naval protection. They insisted that if any funds were voted, the interests of the Pacific coast must not be neglected. This was the kind of local interest that prompted a number of Congressmen to support the new navy, and was prevalent among Southerners as much as any other group.

²⁹ *Congressional Record*, 47th Congress, 2nd Session, 1453-1457 *passim*.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 1512, 1559-1561.

³¹ Not even a treasury bulging with funds could convince the Southerners. Dezen-dorf complained that the treasury was "overflowing with treasure," and begged for relief from such a dilemma because "we do not know what to do with it." *Ibid.*, 1419-1420, 3637.

³² Congressmen Whitthorne and Benjamin Harris of Massachusetts, both former Chairmen of the House Naval Affairs Committee, were no longer members of the House.

mediate predecessors. As a result, naval leadership passed from the House to the Senate.

In 1884 the Senate Naval Affairs Committee introduced legislation authorizing construction of seven new ships. However, House Democrats, aware of the criticism of naval officers for the *ABCD* group, wanted to wait until they were certain that the ships then under construction were satisfactory before authorizing new funds.³³

But this was not the only reason for the recalcitrance of House Democrats. It was an election year and they hoped to appear before the electorate as friends of economy in government. Besides, they were reluctant to award patronage funds to the Secretary of the Navy. Consequently, the Democratic Committee in the House reduced the naval estimates from \$22 million to \$14 million, and even eliminated funds to arm the four ships already under construction. Southern Congressmen applauded Chairman Cox when he boasted that the Democrats wanted no part of "the ideas of prodigality prevailing among gentlemen on the other side."³⁴

Republicans accused the Democrats of "cheese-paring peanut business" in order to play the "role of dramatic economists,"³⁵ and even recruited President Chester A. Arthur to their cause. But the President's special message in support of the seven ships failed to move the Democrats, and the final bill of 1884 involved no new construction. Indeed, the extent of Congressional generosity toward the navy in the session was a six-month extension of the previous year's appropriations.³⁶

After voting to slow down naval expansion, House Democrats adjourned for the Presidential campaign. The Democratic platform called for economy in government and charged the Republicans with squandering public funds. The Republicans promised to work for a larger and more effective navy, and for

³³ Davis, *Navy Second to None*, 41.

³⁴ *New York Times*, April 25, 1884.

³⁵ Quoted in Davis, *Navy Second to None*, 41.

³⁶ The Arthur Administration, for all the credit given it, started the construction of only three cruisers and one dispatch boat. Pletcher, *The Awkward Years*, 125.

the first time in twenty years a national platform included naval expansion.³⁷

In 1884, Southern opponents of naval expansion had received considerable support from Northern Democrats. With the election of Grover Cleveland, the first Democratic President since James Buchanan,³⁸ the economy-minded Southerners perhaps believed that naval expansion would not be the important issue it had been under the previous Administration. However, the wishes of Southern Congressmen opposed to naval increases were ignored as Congress, with Cleveland's urging, provided funds for the construction of thirty ships including two second class battleships, the *Texas* and the *Maine* during the first Cleveland Administration. Now both national parties appeared to endorse the new navy. By 1885, arguments for a larger and more efficient navy were stronger than since the time of the Civil War. The awareness of the strategic importance of the Caribbean was greater than ever as more Americans visualized the construction of an isthmian canal which would need the protection of a greatly enlarged navy. In addition, economic expansion abroad, including the necessary merchant marine, was becoming a national issue. Further, the clauses in previous naval bills prohibiting repairs on obsolete vessels had led to the forced retirement of hundreds of old ships; hence, unless new construction were forthcoming the naval lists would be reduced to almost nothing. Finally, the surplus in the treasury continued to influence Congressional action for a larger naval establishment.³⁹

In February, 1885, a modest naval bill authorizing two small gunboats passed the House with more Southern support than usual.⁴⁰ Party loyalty perhaps accounted for this support, as well as the fact that patronage rewards from a naval increase,

³⁷ Kirk H. Porter, *National Party Platforms* (Second Edition, Urbana, Ill., 1961), 74.

³⁸ Southerners strongly supported Cleveland's nomination in 1884. Allan Nevins, *Grover Cleveland, A Study in Courage* (New York, 1932), 151.

³⁹ Ralph D. Bald, Jr., "The Development of Expansionist Sentiment in the United States, 1865-1895, as Reflected in Periodical Literature" (Unpublished Ph. D., dissertation, University of Pittsburgh, 1953), 168; Sprout, *American Naval Power*, 189-190.

⁴⁰ *Congressional Record*, 48th Congress, 2nd Session, 2049-2050.

though not great for the Southerners, would now benefit the Democrats. But this increase was not substantial. Indeed, the *New York Times*, an eager champion of an enlarged navy, called the gains of the Congress of 1884-1885 "practically ineffectual"; Democrats had done little to stimulate shipbuilding or foreign trade.⁴¹

The 49th Congress witnessed a flood of legislation calling for increased naval expenditures, most of it initiated by the Senate. In the House Hilary Herbert, now the Chairman of the Naval Affairs Committee, took charge of the Administration's program for naval expansion. In July, 1886, Herbert led to passage a bill authorizing two armored cruisers, or second-class battleships.⁴² With the help of President Cleveland, Democratic leaders made the measure a party issue and convinced more Southern Democrats than usual,⁴³ but they were not as successful later. Republicans complained that the increase was too small, and endorsed the Senate measure calling for more construction.⁴⁴ But when the President signed the bill in August, it included only the two large vessels as well as minor additions to the fleet.⁴⁵

In November, 1886, the Senate considered two important naval measures. One called for the construction of ten heavy cruisers while a second proposed to build ten large monitors.⁴⁶ The House rejected both measures, and provided for only two cruisers and four small gunboats. While these additions constituted an increase, they were far less than that desired by naval adherents.

In the House, two Alabamians led the debate. Representative Herbert, who was to become Secretary of the Navy in 1893, believed the request for two cruisers was modest and reasonable, and blamed lack of enthusiasm for new construction on mid-western Congressmen who could not see big-navy needs in the coastal areas.⁴⁷ Yet Herbert asked for only two cruisers, be-

⁴¹ *New York Times*, March 4, 1885.

⁴² *Congressional Record*, 49th Congress, 1st Session, 7475-7501.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 7503.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 7479-7480.

⁴⁵ *Navy Yearbook*, 1917, 33.

⁴⁶ Davis, *Navy Second to None*, 46.

⁴⁷ *Congressional Record*, 49th Congress, 2nd Session, 2334-2346. *passim*.

lieving that House Democrats, especially the Southerners, would agree to little more.⁴⁸

Representative William C. Oates, also of Alabama, disagreed with Herbert on Naval needs. He explained that only a few ships were necessary for use in wartime, we had enough now, and even these would never be needed: "We have no navy and no coast defenses, yet the flag protects our commerce . . . just as securely as though we had the finest navy afloat."⁴⁹ Further, Oates insisted that a large navy was inconsistent with the "spirit and genius" of our system, and urged his colleagues not to tax Americans to buy more ships, but to let them keep their money for more important purposes.⁵⁰ Although many Southerners supported Herbert in his debate with Oates, only twenty-four of them supported him when the House voted 151 to 72 to construct the new cruisers. More than half of the opposition votes came from Southern Congressmen, while House Republicans gave Herbert four times the support he received from the South.⁵¹

In September, 1888, and March, 1889, shortly before Cleveland left the Presidency the first time, Congress authorized five cruisers and a number of smaller vessels.⁵² In the House there was almost no debate on the increases. In each session, Herbert offered long explanations as to general naval needs and the bills at issue. Congressman Boutelle, ranking Republican on the Naval Affairs Committee, repeatedly asked for more than the Democrats requested. Compared to the Republicans, Cleveland asked for minimal naval increases.⁵³ However, even his modest program was resisted by many Southern Congressmen.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 2335.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 2342.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 2345.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 2352.

⁵² *Navy Yearbook*, 1922, 46, 52-53. There were no recorded roll call votes on the most significant measures to increase the navy in 1888 and 1889.

⁵³ The opposition of Southern Congressmen to Cleveland's naval proposals in both of his Administrations is particularly revealing of their attitude. As one of Cleveland's biographers has written: "Ironically, although the 'big navy' enthusiasts of a few years later had reason to feel grateful, Cleveland was not a 'big navy' man, a jingoist or an imperialist. He simply wished the United States to possess a navy sufficient to protect its position in the world." Horace Samuel Merrill, *Bourbon Leader: Grover Cleveland and the Democratic Party* (Boston, 1957), 82-83.

Naval and diplomatic historians generally regard 1890 as the year of decision of the ocean-going battleship navy. In that year Congress appropriated funds for three battleships. The building of ships in conformity with the popular belief (dating back to 1812) that the use of fast cruisers would constitute basic offensive strategy in wartime came under severe criticism. The historian Alfred Thayer Mahan, Secretary of the Navy Benjamin Tracy, Congressman Herbert and others established a new outlook on naval strategy that called for battleships as the nucleus of the fleet. Naval thinking turned more and more in the direction of offensive rather than defensive action, and capital ships were demanded by naval adherents.⁵⁴ As a result, from 1890 to 1896, only three new cruisers were authorized, and one of these was almost of battleship proportions. During the same period at least nine battleships were completed or begun.

Congressional exponents of the big navy in the 1890's argued that diplomatic problems necessitated increases. Strained relations between the United States and Britain, the Samoan controversy, trouble with Italy over the lynchings in New Orleans, the Chilean episode of 1891, and the Venezuelan dispute of the nineties revealed the nation's increasing role in world affairs. In addition, the writings of Mahan were widely accepted after 1890, and no doubt influenced many Congressmen. A growing national consciousness, effective and expansionist secretaries of state and navy, and a fear of war and a subsequent blockade of coastal cities added to the considerable support enjoyed by the proponents of a larger naval establishment based on new battleships.⁵⁵

However, in 1890 the critics of the "new departure" did not default on the issue. Opponents believed that the new navy, as envisioned by some, was too expensive; the "new manifest destiny," and the personal ambitions of a few American politicians cost too much money. Congressmen such as John H. Rogers of Arkansas asked their colleagues to spend money on things more beneficial to the American people than gleaming battleships.⁵⁶ Congressman Joseph D. Sayers of Texas, among the

⁵⁴ Theodore Roosevelt, Washington, D. C., to Secretary of the Navy Hilary Herbert, Washington, D. C., December 12, 1894, Herbert Papers.

⁵⁵ La Feber, *The New Empire*, 122-124; Bald, "Expansionist Sentiment," 207-209.

⁵⁶ *Congressional Record*, 51st Congress, 1st Session, 3271.

strongest opponents of the battleship navy,⁵⁷ opposed the Department's demands because they represented too much of a new departure. Debate between Sayers and Representative Boutelle, now Chairman of the Naval Affairs Committee, was very sharp and often bitter. The former probably expressed the sentiment of many when he charged that not enough crucial information had been given the House by Boutelle's committee to warrant such a large appropriation. Sayers agreed with Representative Samuel R. Peters of Kansas that the "strongest battleship [was] the diplomatic mandate."⁵⁸

Representative Herbert felt that more than a "diplomatic mandate" was needed. A recent convert to Mahan's battleship theories, Herbert wanted to finance two vessels rather than the three requested by Boutelle's committee. His objection to the committee measure was not to the construction of battleships, but only to the number requested at that time.⁵⁹ Herbert's Alabama colleague, Civil War hero Joseph Wheeler, also wanted a stronger navy. He suggested that ships be built for commercial purposes of a style and speed suitable for naval service should the need arise. Wheeler saw the navy almost completely on commercial terms:

We are now a very great nation. We produce substantially one-third of the coal and iron ore, and pig iron . . . that are produced in the world, and yet we have less than one twenty-fifth of the population. We must have foreign commerce. We must find buyers for our surplus products We must build up our commercial marine.⁶⁰

If shipbuilding of any kind was to be increased, Wheeler wanted the Gulf Coast to share in the reward.⁶¹ No doubt this influenced his voting pattern; he may have feared that a reduction in the number of ships to be constructed, of whatever sort, also reduced the chances of new Gulf Coast shipyards. Similar-

⁵⁷ In the 1880's Sayers had served on the House Naval Affairs Committee and had supported Congressman Herbert's naval program.

⁵⁸ *Congressional Record*, 51st Congress, 1st Session, 3164-3166.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 3222, 3257.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 3263. Wheeler believed that the expansion of our commercial interests "would inevitably lead us into war." John P. Dyer, "*Fightin' Joe*" Wheeler (Baton Rouge, La., 1941), 325.

⁶¹ *Congressional Record*, 51st Congress, 1st Session, 3261.

ly, Representative Theodore S. Wilkinson of New Orleans, a strong supporter of the battleship navy, demanded a navy-yard at Algiers, Louisiana, near New Orleans, and felt that was as justified as the erection of a coaling station in Samoa.⁶²

Representative Oates of Alabama did not see a need for either, and urged his colleagues to strike out the appropriations for all three battleships. In April, on an amendment to do this, the House decided against Oates. But his Southern colleagues supported him and in 1890, just as in the other crucial year of 1883, they elected to slow down the naval buildup. Forty-six Southerners voted against any new battleships. Only nineteen of the Dixie solons joined the majority, and over half of these were from South Carolina, Louisiana, and Virginia, where navy yards might have been at stake.⁶³ On the same day, an amendment to reduce the number of battleships from three to one also was defeated. On this roll call, forty-six of the fifty-seven Southern Congressmen who voted were among the minority. After this vote, the naval bill passed without a roll call, and the House then awaited Senate action.⁶⁴

The Senate passed a different bill, and when the conference report came to the House it contained additions. These included requests for funds for the construction of dry-docks at Beaufort, South Carolina and for certain additions to the Norfolk navy yard, and called for the location of a new dry-dock "somewhere" on the Gulf of Mexico. Perhaps these gratuities were meant for Southern consumption. The clause asking for three new battleships was reported back to the House just as that body had passed it earlier. When Congressmen were asked to concur with the conference report, only a dozen Southerners did so. The entire delegations of four Southern states opposed the report. This was hardly an expression of Southern approval for the new departure.⁶⁵

After providing for the construction of only one new cruiser in 1891⁶⁶ Congress in the following year added another battleship

⁶² *Ibid.*, 3273-3274.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 3395-3396.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 3396-3397.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 6495-6496.

⁶⁶ Congressman Sayers led a few Southern and Midwestern Representatives in op-

to the new navy. Again additions came with little Southern support. In the House debate over the battleship, the Georgia delegation displayed keen opposition. Representative Blount, Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee, was concerned over the haste in the passage of naval appropriations. Using a number of parliamentary delaying tactics, he succeeded in killing certain parts of the naval legislation.⁸⁷ Blount's colorful colleague, the irascible Tom Watson saw no need for such a naval buildup, and was convinced that other Georgians believed the same, even though theirs was a coastal state. Not yet the racist of later years, Watson nevertheless spoke in true Darwinian fashion when he assured the House that it was not a navy that made a nation strong—but its people. He reminded his colleagues that mighty Anglo-Saxons had “never met an enemy except to crush him.” Watson insisted that this Congress had pledged itself to reform and retrenchment, and had guaranteed that no money would be expended except that which was absolutely necessary. He agreed that Georgians wanted protection, but not from England and France. They wanted protection from “an outrageous legislature that is taxing our people to death; which is putting labor under the heels of monopoly, and making corporations greater than the citizen.” In an impassioned plea which drew loud applause from the House Watson depicted a terrible state of economic depression in Atlanta, where laborers, especially in the mill districts, were suffering more than the inhabitants of New York slums. Demanding social and economic relief, not a naval increase, Watson told of workers being paid thirty-six cents a day in certain industries. He, too, saw the danger of war—but a war different from that envisioned by some Congressmen.⁸⁸

Representative Benton McMillan of Tennessee saw no need for a new navy because he saw no enemies of the United States. The greatest danger the nation faced, he said, was a financial one that would come as a result of naval increases.⁸⁹

position to this conservative request of the Republican leadership. On a motion to re-commit the bill to the Naval Committee with instructions to omit the construction of a new cruiser, Southern Congressmen voted 29-23 for re-committal. *Congressional Record*, 51st Congress, 2nd Session, 1839-1840.

⁸⁷ *Congressional Record*, 52nd Congress, 1st Session, 3228, 3270.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 3230-3231, 3360-3361.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 5956.

But the new battleship had champions among Southern members of the House. Congressman Herbert once again fought off the more ambitious proposals of Boutelle and others. In the interest of economy Herbert argued for only one ship; perhaps realizing this was about all he could get.⁷⁰

Herbert received strong support from Representative Thomas R. Stockdale of Mississippi, who wanted a big navy and a dry-dock on the Gulf Coast,⁷¹ and also from Representative Adolph Meyer of Louisiana who wanted the same things. The latter was particularly vocal in proposing the new addition, citing both commercial and military reasons for the increase.⁷²

When the appropriations bill left the House in early 1892 it contained funds for the construction of only one cruiser. However, after the more sympathetic Senate acted, the House was faced in the conference committee with legislation authorizing two new battleships. In the House Herbert now fought for the two ships, in spite of the fact that he had been unsuccessful before in his request for only one. On a motion to accept the Senate proposal, six Southern delegations did not offer a single affirmative vote, and two other states had only one Representative apiece who voted for the funds.⁷³ In July, the House finally agreed to the one battleship, but only thirteen Dixie Congressmen joined the majority, representing only four states: Louisiana, Florida, Alabama, and Mississippi.⁷⁴ *The New York Times* applauded what it considered a "good day for the Navy."⁷⁵ But the South had not been friendly, and once again voiced its disapproval of the new departure.

Because of the financial panic of 1893, Democratic leaders requested no new battleships in either that year or the next. When Republicans moved in the House for an additional battleship in 1893, they were defeated by Democrats from all sections. Even Southern naval adherents such as Meyer of New Orleans

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 3271, 3319-3324.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 3260-3261.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 3229-3230.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 5958.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 6187.

⁷⁵ *New York Times*, July 15, 1892.

agreed with the House leaders that the depression dictated a pause in the construction of the battleship navy.⁷⁶ To Congressman Boutelle the Democratic requests touched the "low-water mark of appropriations" providing for the battleship navy;⁷⁷ he complained that the naval resurgence, begun under President Arthur, "was now practically abandoned under President Cleveland and Secretary Herbert."⁷⁸

But before the Democrats relinquished control of the House to the Republicans in March, 1895, they helped authorize the construction of two new battleships. The debate of that year, in which Southerners figured prominently, revealed fundamental differences among Congressmen as to the necessity of a larger and more expensive navy, the proper role of a navy in a free society, the danger of an increasing worldwide armaments race, the possibility of war and American expansion, and even naval strategy. The House bill called for three new battleships and some naval enthusiasts supported the additions because they saw war on the horizon. "Nothing was so inevitable as war," Congressman Hernando de Soto Money of Mississippi told his colleagues, and the people must be ready "to command the peace we love."⁷⁹ Money's opponents insisted that no nation threatened the interests of the United States; indeed, Representative Joseph E. Washington of Tennessee viewed America's naval build-up itself as a threat to world peace.⁸⁰

A number of Southerners followed the lead of Representative Sayers of Texas who opposed the new additions for reasons of economy. As each section of the appropriations bill was presented to the House for debate, Sayers moved to strike out large portions because he believed the people could not afford the large naval program.⁸¹ On many occasions, Sayers was answered by Congressmen Meyer and Money who warned that "we have economized, and we are defenseless."⁸²

⁷⁶ *Congressional Record*, 53rd Congress, 2nd Session, 4634.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 53rd Congress, 1st Session, 2567.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 53rd Congress, 2nd Session, 4621. In February, 1893, Cleveland appointed Herbert as Secretary of the Navy.

⁷⁹ *Congressional Record*, 53rd Congress, 3rd Session, 2423.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 2343, 2347, 2460-2461.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 2303.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 2240, 2247, 2304, 2422, 2460.

A few Southern Congressmen viewed the economics of the matter from another point of view, and in doing so revealed one of the dilemmas of any military build-up. For instance, Meyer confessed that it was too late to turn away from the armaments race:

We are about reaching a point when if we stop constructing ships the extensive plants and workshops for armor, war-ships, and the like will be abandoned and go to waste, and the present well-organized and skilled body of mechanics and laborers will be dispersed.⁸³

Meyer warned that European nations—competitors for naval power—might then hire these displaced workers, and the United States would suffer considerable losses.⁸⁴

By 1895 proposals for an Isthmian Canal and the annexation of Hawaii were being debated throughout the country. Naval increases were a part of both plans as Representative Money often advised the House. But a few Southerners opposed naval expansion because of its very role in the design of American expansionists. Representative Washington was convinced that the “great anxiety for a large new navy had some connection with the desire for territorial acquisition.”⁸⁵

Among Southern Congressmen the naval debate covered a wide range of attitudes. Those who identified a large navy with “national greatness”⁸⁶ were admonished by others who warned that a large naval establishment was contrary to the well-being of a free people and suggestive of an all powerful central government.⁸⁷ Those who doubted that the battleship was “the ship of the future” were lectured by Congressman Leonidas F. Livingston of Georgia and Representative Money who asked whether Congress should “trust this matter to the judgment” of naval dissenters “or to the judgment of the Navy?”⁸⁸ Southern Congressmen even quarreled with each

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 2262.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 2303.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 2261, 2423.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 2244, 2247.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 2242, 2312, 2461.

other as to the necessity of additional navy yards and docks in the South. Meyer continued his long struggle for a dry-dock at Algiers, Louisiana, while Money supported increased naval facilities throughout the Gulf Coast area. Representative Washington saw no need for these pet projects, insisting we had more than enough "repair shops" as it was.⁸⁰

Concerned by the outspoken opposition of a few Southerners, Democratic Congressmen who endorsed the Administration's bill—including Southerners—accused their opponents of a lack of patriotism in opposing the battleships. Money charged that Sayers, the perennial antagonist of naval enthusiasts, had "not manifested the patriotic disposition which we look for from a leader."⁸⁰ When Sayers defended his patriotism,⁸¹ he was advised by others to prove it "by voting for the navy." Representative J. Fred C. Talbott of Maryland implored his Democratic colleagues to "once again put our party before this country as it stood before the war. This is patriotic in us, it will be as patriotic as then."⁸² Faced with such an obligation, Southern Congressmen voted 39 to 27 for the three new battleships.⁸³ The Senate's naval bill authorized only two, and the House adopted the Senate bill on the last day of the session in March.⁸⁴

A year later the Cleveland Administration asked for two additional battleships. The Senate authorized two, but the House, under Republican control, voted for four. The debate in the House over the four battleships was considerably briefer than in the previous year, and centered around the prospect of war. Southern Congressmen hardly participated in the debate, except to defend the needs for the additions to naval facilities

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 2304.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 2423.

⁸² The need for defending his patriotism varied from one Southern Congressman to another. Secretary Herbert claimed that support for the new navy was the best way a Southern Congressman could dispel "sectional prejudice. Political animosities surely could not obscure the patriotism of ex-Confederates when they should unite" in support of the new navy. Undated speech, Herbert Papers.

⁸³ *Congressional Record*, 53rd Congress, 3rd Session, 2464.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 2468-2469

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 3232. Some Republicans were unhappy with the naval bill because it only authorized the new ships, leaving to the next Congress, with a Republican majority in the House, the responsibility for the necessary appropriations.

in the South. When Representative Sayers moved that the House agree with the Senate on just two battleships, Southern Congressmen voted 32-21 for his proposal.⁹⁵ However, the House bill as passed contained four battleships; later the House compromised with the Senate on three additions.⁹⁶

Since the naval appropriation of 1896 was one of the largest in the period of the naval renaissance, no new battleships were authorized the following year. But in 1898, after the Spanish-American War began, Congress approved the construction of three new battleships as well as support for the navy in many other respects. Thus, "thanks to seventeen years of honest effort"⁹⁷ by naval supporters, the "overwhelming superiority of American naval resources"⁹⁸ made short work of the "splendid little war." When hostilities started, the navy had (excluding the *Maine*) five battleships as well as a number of cruisers and monitors and smaller vessels.⁹⁹ As a result of the victory, the United States "rose from continental to world power"¹⁰⁰ with a fleet that ranked sixth among the navies of the world.

A number of considerations led Southern Congressmen to oppose the American Naval Revolution. For one thing, most of them were economic conservatives, reluctant to endorse large federal expenditures unless they could realize substantial gains for their districts, or political gains for themselves. Since most

⁹⁵ *Congressional Record*, 54th Congress, 1st Session, 3254.

⁹⁶ *New York Times*, June 10, 1896. The sizeable Southern opposition to these naval increases indicates that Dixie Congressmen continued to be much slower than Congressmen from other sections in accepting the new capital-ship theories of naval defense. In the naval debates of 1895 and 1896, the Sprouts have written, "a really substantial number of Senators and Representatives, for the first time, displayed a fair understanding of the strategic theory implicit in all naval legislation since 1890. And the general endorsement of this theory, that accompanied the process of Congressional reorientation, squarely aligned the national legislature with the political executive and with the Service, both of whom were now thoroughly committed to zone extending outward from our continental seaboards on the Atlantic, the Gulf, and the Pacific." Sprout, *American Naval Power*, 221-222.

⁹⁷ Brayton Harris, *The Age of the Battleship, 1890-1922* (New York, 1965), 50.

⁹⁸ Sprout, *American Naval Power*, 232.

⁹⁹ Mitchell, *Modern American Navy*, 53.

¹⁰⁰ Herrick, *American Naval Revolution*, 247.

of the economic rewards of the new navy went to Northern interests,¹⁰¹ only those Southern Congressmen who represented constituencies around Norfolk, Port Royal, Key West, Pensacola, and New Orleans would gain substantially from the naval build-up. Patronage, usually a potent force in mustering political support, was hard for Southern Congressmen to get,¹⁰² regardless of which party headed the Navy Department.¹⁰³

Despite the desire of Southern Congressmen to display loyalty to their reunited country, there was a reluctance, or perhaps an inability on their part to understand national problems. This was particularly true of the House of Representatives, which has historically been less concerned with national issues than the Senate. Conditions in their districts often preoccupied many of the Southerners. Private papers left by Southern Congressmen of the period reveal a steady stream of correspondence concerning local party affairs, political campaigns, job applicants, and the general fence-mending every Congressman must attend to. Far less correspondence deals with the broader national concerns of the day.¹⁰⁴

Party loyalty, one of the strongest political practices of Southern politicians, probably accounted for some of the support granted Democratic bills leading to the new navy. But this did not go far; in his second Administration Cleveland had few friends among Southern Democrats. Secretary Herbert

¹⁰¹ In praising Secretary Herbert after his death, one admirer claimed: "No evidence of the loyalty of ex-Confederates could be so conclusive as support of appropriations to upbuild a navy, when the money to build, equip, provision and munition it was going North and none of it South." Unsigned, undated, speech honoring Herbert, Herbert Papers.

¹⁰² William G. McAdoo, Assistant Secretary of the Navy, Washington, D. C., to Representative Thomas Settle, Reidsville, North Carolina, Oct. 28, 1895. Thomas Settle Papers, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina Library, Chapel Hill, North Carolina.

¹⁰³ Even Southern Congressmen who supported the navy often went unrewarded. Congressmen from New Orleans worked endlessly for a drydock at Algiers, Louisiana, but were not successful until the very last years of the naval resurgence. Congressman Dezendorf of Norfolk was victimized by President Arthur, who awarded patronage to Dezendorf's political enemies.

¹⁰⁴ For instance, see the Thomas Settle Papers, James C. C. Black Papers, John Steele Henderson Papers, Isidor Rayner Papers, James A. Walker Papers, John Randolph Tucker and Henry St. George Tucker Papers, all in the Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina Library, Chapel Hill, North Carolina.

lamented that the temptation of Democrats to hurt Cleveland and his Administration was "not to be resisted."¹⁰⁵

Southern Congressmen believed that the new navy contributed to the increasing power of the central government, a tendency most of them refused to encourage. While few scorned the "military establishment" or the "officer castes" as savagely as did Tom Watson, some did consider the naval resurgence a threat to the liberty of a free people and a violation of American tradition. Even if the majority of Southern Congressmen did not base their opposition to the navy on these grounds, their lack of interest in the navy indicates that the South, contrary to the findings of some historians, was little more militant than other sections of the nation. For every "Fighting Joe" Wheeler of Alabama there was a Henry Cabot Lodge or a Charles A. Boutelle. Further, the belief of Southerners that a large naval establishment was inimical to the interests of a free society suggests that Southern Congressmen—at least verbally—were as "democratically minded" as those from other sections of the country.

Finally, Southern Congressmen rejected the historical lessons offered them first by Congressman Whitthorne and then by Captain Mahan. While the Southerners were as interested in commercial expansion as other Congressmen, they doubted the need for a large naval establishment to implement commercial policy. Like Mahan, Southern Congressmen believed that commerce was the "civilizing" factor that enabled the prosperous nations to help the unfortunate peoples of the world; unlike him, however, they were satisfied that commerce could perform this mission without the help of a new navy.

¹⁰⁵ "Grandfather's Talks," 295, Herbert Papers.

THE CYCLE OF MILITARY AND ECONOMIC INTERESTS: A THEORY OF CONFEDERATE DEFEAT

By

T. L. Connelly

In April, 1863, an ugly mob stormed through the streets of Richmond in a protest against food shortages. Shoes that had scarcely cost over a dollar in 1860 now sold for fifteen. Impressment agents were paying a comparatively low price of \$500 for a single bushel of wheat. Throughout the Confederacy men traded openly with the enemy while others who had once cried for secession now whispered for some peace arrangement.¹

Because such conditions existed, the historian will err if he attempts to separate the economic and military functions of the Civil War. Each was dependent on the other. If the military effort were to be successful, it had to be supported by the citizenry behind the lines. But if the citizenry supported the war effort, their own set of economic problems had to be solved, partly by the aid of the military. Thus the Confederacy was caught in this cycle of the close relationship of war and civilian economic interests. In attempting to perfect a balance between these two interests, a problem arose which Southern leaders were not prepared to answer. Was the type of economy that the South possessed making it difficult for war and economic interests to maintain this cycle without a cooperation that would violate the Southern state rights tradition? Could not the collapse of the Confederacy be at least partially caused by a failure of cooperation between military and two basic economic interests, finances and business interests?

Financially, the South entered the war with a colonial economy. The entire success of its fiscal system was based upon uninterrupted commerce, for its economic prosperity depended upon the exportation of staple crops such as cotton and tobacco. Having no large supplies of capital, and being essentially a debtor section, it was hampered from the outset by a lack of fluid capital or specie to sustain its currency. This was bad enough,

¹ J. B. Jones, *A Rebel War Clerk's Diary at the Confederate States Capital*, 2 vols. (Philadelphia, 1866), I, 284-86; *Richmond Enquirer*, October 30, 1863.

but the problem was intensified by the pitiful conditions of Southern industry. At the beginning of the war, Northern factories boasted six times as many working men as Southern manufacturers, and the value of what they produced was five and a half times as great. The Northern banking capital was seven times as great, and their railroads twice as extensive. The agrarian South had to depend upon other sections for tools, machines, and many other manufactured articles; this drained away what little capital the section did possess. Nor was the situation made any easier by the South's *laissez-faire* individualism, which shied away from government encouragement of badly needed factories and railroads.²

The existence of such a narrow economy was confirmed by two problems that arose to challenge the young Confederacy. The first was a shortage of gold or other specie to bolster its currency. Before the cotton loans, what little specie that was obtained came from Southern banks or by seizing federal mints. For example, Louisiana seized the United States mint and the subtreasury. This totaled about \$536,781.00 which was turned over to the Confederate treasury which accepted with thanks the fund "so generously tendered." When New Orleans fell in 1862, the Confederacy seized about \$2,500,000.00; the banks were given treasury notes in return. By utilizing similar methods, the government was able to scrape together about \$27,000,000.00 during its existence. Yet it did not solve the matter of providing a sound currency, as practically all of its specie had to be sent abroad for state and Confederate purchases of supplies and munitions. The government was forced to look elsewhere for war finance.³

President Davis' government then made a serious error which gave further proof of its limited financial outlook: Davis

² Charles W. Ramsdell, *Behind the Lines in the Southern Confederacy*, ed. by Wendell Holmes Stephenson (Baton Rouge, 1944), 3-5, 103; Francis Butler Simkins, *A History of the South* (New York, 1956), 220-21; Louise Biles Hill, *Joseph E. Brown and the Confederacy* (Chapel Hill, 1939), 139.

³ E. Merton Coulter, *The Confederate States of America 1861-65* Vol. VII in *A History of the South*, 10 vols., ed. by Wendell Holmes Stephenson and E. Merton Coulter (Baton Rouge, 1950), 151-52; John Christopher Schwab, *The Confederate States of America 1861-65 a Financial and Industrial History of the South During the Civil War* (New York and London, 1901), 142-44.

realized that British cotton yarn factories were dependent mainly upon Southern cotton. Possessing the traditional Southern faith in the power of king cotton to force diplomatic recognition, he did not wait for the Union blockade to cut off cotton shipments, but proposed to create a cotton famine of his own by restricting shipments abroad. He gambled that Britain had France could not withstand the cotton shortage, but would be forced to intervene. It was a dangerous gamble, because cotton was the only basis of credit that the South had, since the country had been drained of its gold supply.⁴

Nevertheless Davis managed to rally public opinion around a cotton embargo, and a general prohibition of cotton exports was maintained for over a year almost by sheer public opinion. Newspaper editors, planters, and even cotton factors became enchanted with the power of the king. Davis did not want to make the embargo too obvious by passing an act forbidding it; actually, he did not need one. Enthusiastic citizens organized committees of public safety to guarantee that no cotton would even get near a major port for several months, until the embargo policy was abandoned. The policy itself was fairly successful in blocking cotton shipments; between September, 1861, and January, 1862, less than 10,000 bales were sent into the major Southern ports, whereas over 1,500,000 bales had entered the ports the year before.⁵

But Europe remained unimpressed. The *London Times* commented that the South could get cotton through the blockade if it so desired, but that the Confederate government had forbidden it in order to force foreign intervention. In fact, no one seemed excited about the embargo except the South itself. Because of this, Davis changed his strategy in 1862. He now realized that Europe, with a temporary cotton reserve at the time, would not be troubled by the situation as long as it knew that bales of cotton were stacked behind the embargo, only waiting a favorable opportunity to be shipped. Still blinded by their

⁴ Frank L. Owsley, "The Confederacy and King Cotton: a Study in Economic Coercion," *North Carolina Historical Review*, VI (October, 1929), 371-97; John Christopher Schwab, "Prices in the Confederate States, 1861-65," *Political Science Quarterly*, XIV (June, 1899), 281-304.

⁵ Owsley, "The Confederacy and King Cotton: a Study in Economic Coercion," 372-91.

estimation of its diplomatic power, the Confederates started destroying their cotton to prove they meant business. Newspapers urged planters to burn their next crop, and the entire section agreed that surely these potent measures would force Europe's hand.

But when Europe remained unmoved, Davis and his associates realized that they had made a bad mistake. The Federal blockade was non-existent for several months after it was declared, and was loose and ineffective until the middle of 1862. The Confederates could have taken advantage of this and have shipped perhaps a million bales into Europe by 1862, where the cotton could have served to help put the South's economy on a sound basis. Davis had chosen between the South's only basis for badly needed credit and European intervention, and had lost both. Richmond's attitude towards the embargo demonstrated a defect that would plague many of its future policies. While officially prohibiting the exportation of cotton, the government made exceptions in favor of individual exporters who shared profits with the government, and sometimes Richmond would import military supplies on its own account. This resulted in the South's cotton market being cornered by private speculators who could monopolize European markets and even undersell the government. By waiting too long to establish firm control of the cotton market, the Confederate government, as Frank Owsley stated, presented "too much of the appearance of locking the stable after the mare had fled." The Confederate organ in London, the *Index*, observed that, had the Central government taken firm control of cotton sales abroad, the Confederacy could have purchased ample war supplies and necessary commodities.⁸

By fall of 1862 the South's credit was exhausted, and Richmond resorted to every expedient to secure funds. The property of alien enemies was sequestered, and military supplies were impressed; duties were placed on exports and imports, and loans flooded the country. In order to purchase military supplies, the central authorities turned to a policy of cotton loans, which had already been in operation since the successful \$15,000,000.00

⁸ Frank L. Owsley, *King Cotton Diplomacy: Foreign Relations of the Confederate States of America* (Chicago, 1931), 416-17; Schwab, "Prices in the Confederate States, 1861-65," 296; *London Index*, (7) December 24, 1863.

loan of February, 1861. These cotton loans were of two main types; some were floated in the Confederacy, as in the case of the produce loans, and some, such as the Erlanger loan, transacted between the government and overseas financiers.⁷

The produce loans were originally designed to provide the government with cash in hand. Under the first two such loans of May 16, 1861, and August 19, 1861, farmers and planters sold their crops, and from their earnings paid the government the subscribed portion in specie, foreign bills of exchange, or as in the second loan, Confederate treasury notes. In return the subscribers would receive twenty-year government bonds. The third produce loan of April 21, 1862, authorized a direct exchange of articles-in-kind for government bonds, and was the center of a long political struggle over constitutional authority.⁸

Secretary of the Treasury Memminger had originally opposed the principle of receiving articles-in-kind for government bonds. The conflict had arisen when planters began urging the government to buy their produce outright, instead of borrowing the proceeds from its sale. The tightening of the blockade had resulted in an accumulation of unsold cotton, with the result that planters were getting low prices on the cotton market.

Here the Confederates made another mistake. The government could get more for the cotton on credit in Europe than the planters could sell it for on the glutted markets at home. But Memminger bogged down on a legal technicality, and replied that the Constitution gave no power to any department to lend money for the relief of any particular interest; he further suggested that the planters should diversify their crops. Receiving no aid from Richmond, the planters turned to state authorities. The states snapped up the chance to acquire cotton for their own purchases, and gave the cotton planters state bonds or treasury notes in return. The States expected to redeem their bonds and notes with receipts from cotton sales, and began to carry on

⁷ John Christopher Schwab, "The Financier of the Confederate States," *Yale Review*, II (November, 1893), 288-301; Richard C. Todd, "The Produce Loans: A Means of Financing the Confederacy," *North Carolina Historical Review*, XXVII (January, 1950), 46-75; Richard C. Todd, *Confederate Finance* (Athens, Ga., 1954), 25-26.

⁸ Todd, "The Produce Loans: A Means of Financing the Confederacy," 46-47.

cotton speculation at home and abroad. This speculation interfered with similar operations of the central government by competing with it on European markets.⁹

The entire system of securing loans revealed a lack of central organization in Confederate policy. Although the produce loans accumulated some \$70,000,000.00 and managed to withdraw over \$34,000,000.00 of inflated treasury notes from circulation, they created additional problems. The cotton agents of the War Department found themselves competing with private speculators and agents of the produce loan and individual states. Cotton prices rose because planters were unwilling to sell until they could get the best price for their cotton. Reports of fraud, stealing, and illicit trade increased; some planters in fringe areas resold cotton they had sold to the government. Conditions were especially deplorable in the Mississippi Valley, where fraudulent speculators armed themselves with forged government papers, and even legitimate government agents were often charged with collusion.¹⁰

Fumbling for a solution to the problem of finances, Davis turned to foreign loans. In 1862 the embargo was lifted and blockade running was encouraged. By those measures the government hoped to obtain funds for their European agents and also prove to Europe that the blockade was ineffective and thus in violation of the declaration of Paris. Its own letters of credit in Europe exhausted, Richmond adopted a policy of hypothecating cotton. The government issued to Europeans cotton certificates that certified that a certain number of bales had been placed in their possession by the Confederacy. This cotton was to be redeemed when it was considered feasible, in return for a specie loan. The most famous of these loans was the Emile Erlanger loan of \$15,000,000.00. The Erlanger loan was not in itself a success as the Confederates received only about \$2,599,000.00 in the transaction, but it was the beginning of a more orderly system of foreign financing that might have been quite successful in 1861.¹¹

⁹ *Ibid.*, 53-60.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 64, 68-70, 73-74.

¹¹ Owsley, *King Cotton Diplomacy*, 384-88, 404, 413-14; Hill, *Joseph E. Brown and the Confederacy*, 152-54.

Chaotic purchasing by various bureaus nullified much of the success of foreign loans, and the central government was forced to compete with seaboard states for shipping space on blockade runners. Much of this would be alleviated in August of 1864 when all cotton purchasing east of the Mississippi River was put under the Bureau of Foreign Supplies, but in the meantime the government sought some other solution. Davis and his government found themselves faced with choosing between increased issues of treasury notes and direct taxes. Taxes would have increased the government revenue and would have helped to control inflation. But the bugaloo of an agrarian people's dislike for taxes and a fear of violating constitutional authority forced the government to issue more treasury notes instead.¹²

Overlooking a better way to finance the war, the government proceeded to issue such large sums of the non-interest bearing notes that by October, 1864, \$992,000,000.00 in Confederate currency was outstanding. Richmond was then forced to pass a series of acts, culminating in the funding act of February 17, 1864, that were designed to withdraw excessive currency from circulation. This virtual admittance to the people that they could place no confidence in their own government's currency lowered public morale.¹³

The fact that prices continued to rise even in the face of the contraction of the currency by the funding acts, and continued to rise as the morale of the people declined, has been overlooked by many Civil War historians, who blame inflated currency for the Confederacy's high prices. This is partially true, for an examination of currency prices of various commodities indicates that inflation was involved. Based upon the 1860 average of \$1.00 in currency, coffee sold for \$195.00 a pound in February, 1865, and flour sold for \$83.00. But gold prices also rose, which reflected the changes in popular feeling as to the war's outcome, as John Christopher Schwab's study of the relation of gold prices and public opinion indicated. Schwab based his study on the deliberate opinion expressed over a series

¹² Schwab, "Financier of the Confederate States," 295, 300-301; Owsley, *King Cotton Diplomacy*, 413-14; Hill, *Joseph E. Brown and the Confederacy*, 152-4.

¹³ Schwab, "Financier of the Confederate States," 288-9, 297; *Ibid.*, "Prices in the Confederate States, 1861-65," 281.

of months in market quotations, and he found a definite correlation in Confederate military failures and a corresponding rise of gold prices, which in turn raised commodity prices. Federal successes in spring of 1862 when they occupied Fort Donelson and New Orleans resulted in a rise in prices, as did Northern victories at Gettysburg and Vicksburg in summer of 1863. Thus Confederate military failures produced lowered morale, which in turn produced high prices that crippled the military effort and again lowered morale. Until after the funding act of February, 1864, went into operation, few leaders in Richmond realized that a lack of public confidence in the central government could produce inflation. Most of the Confederacy's financial policies were directed toward martialing the support of the planter and banker class, and it was taken for granted that the less wealthy elements understood why produce loans and taxes-in-kind were adopted. This assumption was a mistake, as evidenced in the decline of public confidence and the rise of prices after the 1864 funding act. The people lost faith in a government that could not meet its obligations and that would not take the common people into confidence on matters of public finance.¹⁴

The scarcity of articles also produced higher prices. The blockade restricted importation of such articles as coffee, cereals, and iron products, and their prices soon rose. For example, in 1861 the Wilmington and Weldon Railroad purchased nails for four cents a pound, but in 1864 when iron shipments were cut off or diverted to military use, nails cost the railroad four dollars a pound. But the blockade was not the only cause of the scarcity of goods. Farmers and planters hoarded cotton and other crops to gain a higher market price. Northern invasion of areas such as Louisiana cut off the supply of such items as sugar. Private speculators cornered the market on a product and sold it for a higher price. Huge sums of promissory notes were issued by individuals, banks, railroads, and state and local governments. Some of these notes competed in value with Confederate notes, and actually depressed the value of the

¹⁴ Ralph Louis Andreano, "A Theory of Confederate Finance," *Civil War History*, IV (December 1956), 24-8; Schwab, "Prices in the Confederate States, 1861-65," 282, 289, 291-3.

government's currency, while the remainder flooded the market and created inflation.

Yet only feeble attempts were made to control prices. Individual states passed laws that attempted to regulate prices only as part of a move to regulate speculators and extortioners. These laws forbade both the monopolizing of any produce, and the receiving of an "unjust" price for an article. Such laws were not enforced, however. In 1863 the central government approved an act that regulated impressment prices; if the impressment officers and the owner disagreed on the price of a product to be impressed, a local citizen was to act as an umpire. If the officer disagreed on the price set by the mediator, he could appeal to a state board of commissioners which had been established. This board was also responsible for studying the market conditions and fixing maximum prices which the impressment agents could pay for supplies. This principle of the paying of fixed prices by the government remained in operation until the last few months of the war, but did little to influence market prices. In 1864 an attempt was made to extend the provisions of this act to all purchasers, but was opposed as unconstitutional, and *laissez-faire* again impeded a needed effort.¹⁵

This same fear of governmental interference prevented the Confederates from ever adopting a successful tax system. Popular dislike of taxation at the beginning of the war was based partially on the belief that import and export duties would furnish sufficient revenue without having to resort to a direct tax. But that was peacetime thinking, and for a group of rebelling states at war it was a fatal error. Instead of seeing taxes as a practical way for the government to finance the war and as a means of controlling inflation, angry citizens protested even the mention of taxes. Public meetings were held to pressure Congress for more currency and less money. Popular opposition cowed Congress into watering down the first tax law of August 19, 1861, so that it was no longer a tax, but instead, a loan. The tax of fifty cents per one hundred dollars on such items as slaves and

¹⁵ John Christopher Schwab, "The Finances of the Confederate States," *Political Science Quarterly*, VII (March, 1892), 38-56; Schwab, "Prices in the Confederate States, 286-87, 301-302; Howard Douglas Dozier, *A History of the Atlantic Coast Line Railroad* (Boston and New York, 1920), 164.

real estate was allowed to be assumed a state for its citizens, at a ten per-cent discount. Only three states collected the tax; the others borrowed the money to pay the Confederate treasury and then issued their own bank notes to cover the loss. These actions defeated an opportunity to reduce inflation, and strengthened the policy of borrowing instead of taxing.¹⁶

Two years elapsed before Congress stiffened and passed the comprehensive tax law of April 24, 1863, which included a ten per-cent tax-in-kind on agricultural produce. Yet even this tax was not made severe until it was amended in February, 1864. By then it was probably too late to accomplish much, and indecision, the Shibboleth of the Confederacy, again was to blame. The real reason why no successful tax policy was ever effected was because Congress hesitated to violate the sacred writ of the Confederate Constitution, which contained a clause requiring a census to be taken before direct taxes could be levied, in order to apportion the taxes according to population. As the first census was not to be taken until 1865, Secretary of the Treasury Memminger found the financial hands of the Confederacy tied. It was not until the adoption of the February, 1864, tax that Memminger was able to persuade Congress that the Confederacy's financial condition no longer permitted a strict adherence to legalistic principles.¹⁷

The Confederates also failed to correlate war and business interests. The operation of Confederate railroads is a prime example of where both a business and the war effort were impeded by the state rights problem. In its dealings with railroads, the central government displayed its usual inconsistency in its relationship with business interests. Fearful of going beyond its delegated powers, Davis' government exercised just enough control to impede the operations of the transportation system, but not enough central control to maintain the railroads on a sound basis, with the result that the policy of half-interference probably nullified any benefits they were attempting to administer. For example, a failure to establish a system of rates at the first of the war resulted in widespread confusion.

¹⁶ Schwab, "Financier of the Confederate States," 290-92, 294-95; Todd, *Confederate Finance*, 121, 131-32.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 292-94; *Ibid.*, 141, 148-49.

Railroads were still in the competitive stage in 1861, and because no single line had control of the rates from the lower South to Virginia, railroad officials saw little to gain in lowering their own fares. Instead they called conventions at Montgomery and Chattanooga, and tried to determine some uniform rate for transportation of government articles. But many railroads did not pay attention to these meetings and continued to raise their own fares. This meant another conference would have to be held, with new rates adopted. A lack of uniform central control resulted in general confusion. Some railroads were not receiving a fair price, while others were capitalizing on the lack of supervision to charge excessive fares.¹⁸

The usual statistics given to compare Northern and Southern railroad systems give the North 22,000 miles of track to the South's 9,000 miles. This figure is misleading, for many of the South's 9,000 miles of track were Short lines such as those running from the west bank of the Mississippi at Memphis and Baton Rouge, and even the larger railroads had problems of trans-shipment, due to a variety of gauges. In 1861 Chattanooga, Knoxville, Lynchburg, Savannah, and Petersburg were among the large number of towns where the railroads did not connect. The towns themselves strongly opposed attempts to establish a unified rail system, for a changing of passengers or cargo from one railroad to another bolstered the city father's incomes. Ordinance and commissary stores piled up at the points due to the needless delay, but the central government hesitated to force any rail junctions. Robert E. Lee urged that the tracks be connected at Petersburg so that there would be a continuous supply line between Richmond and the lower South, but the town opposed the measure. The Virginia state legislature passed a measure authorizing the connection, and the question soon arose of whether it should be a temporary or permanent connection; the railroads opposed a temporary junction and the towns opposed a permanent one. Because the government hesitated to intervene where its constitutional powers would be questioned, no action was taken and congestion continued.¹⁹

¹⁸ Charles W. Ramsdell, "The Confederate Government and the Railroads," *American Historical Review*, XXII (July, 1917).

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 795-97; John F. Stover, *The Railroads of the South 1865-1900: A Study in Financial Control* (Chapel Hill, 1955), 19; Coulter, *Confederate States of America*, 267-70.

Nor was Richmond able to cope with the problem of keeping the railroads in operating condition. Historians usually attribute the gaps in the Confederate transportation system to a depletion of the small available supply of rolling stock and a failure to be able to replenish what was available. This is partially correct for there was a severe shortage of rolling stock in the South. The Baltimore and Ohio Railroad had one-half as many passenger cars as the entire Confederacy, and when the war and blockade cut off its supply, the South was forced to get along on what it had. But the problem was deeper than that, and involved a lack of governmental supervision. It was not only that railroad cars and iron rails were not available, but also they were never in the right place at the right time. There was a severe shortage of rolling stock on the important railroads that carried grain, beef and pork from the Tennessee Valley to Lynchburg, Virginia, to supply Lee's army, but when Quartermaster General Mayers tried to obtain cars from less strategic roads, their officials became angry and few cars were secured. Members of Congress fought a bill authorizing the construction of a line between Danville, Virginia, and Greensboro, North Carolina, charging that it was a violation of the Constitution, under the guise of military necessity, for the government to provide the financial backing for the needed road. The project was delayed more than two years, and was not completed until May, 1864, just in time to relieve the pressure off the Weldon Railroad. A long list of connections needed to sustain the war effort were consistently opposed by the ultra-conservatives in Congress.²⁰

Nor would the central government assume the responsibility of helping to keep the roads in repair. Railroad officials attempted to obtain supplies in Europe on credit, but the administration refused to take any part in financing companies for the purpose of getting enough capital for credit on cotton. The railroad officials then tried to persuade Richmond to import materials for sale to private railroads, but this was refused on the grounds that the government would be operating in the realm of private business. The only alternative was for the railroads to produce their own supplies. Early in the war their

²⁰ Coulter, *Confederate States of America*, 275; Ramsdell, "Confederate Government and the Railroads," 798, 801-803.

officials suggested that shops be improved with government aid and that a close cooperation should exist between governmental and private sources to facilitate construction and repair of equipment. Adhering to its non-interference policy, the administration preferred to contract directly with the companies and to leave to them the problem of maintaining the roads.²¹

This same hesitancy to assume complete control hampered a cooperation of manufacturing and the war effort. Instead of taking control of industry, the government discovered what they considered to be a method of control over manufacturing that would pacify rigid constitutionalists. By threatening factories with conscription of their employees, through a series of conscription acts, Davis hoped to coerce manufacturers to contract with the government and not with private individuals. The first conscription act of April 16, 1862, clearly gave the secretary of war a means of forcing manufacturers to contract, but its purpose was defeated five days later when an act was passed with a long list of exemptions, which were issued so liberally that few manufacturers felt the pressure.²²

The exemption acts were typical of the central government's doing things half-way with regard to economic affairs. If they desired to use conscription as a coercive measure, then it should have been enforced in such a way as to achieve success. But exemption laws were so liberal during the early years of the war that the measure lost much of its power. Various county officials were exempted, with the result that men who had never voted now sought public office. Teachers were made exempt and a spontaneous interest in education developed in many localities. State authorities shielded their own people by certifying that all industrial laborers were employed in state enterprises, and thus were exempt. The entire system encouraged fraud. Superintendents and operators of wool and cotton yarn factories could be exempt provided their profits did not exceed seventy-five percent of their production costs. Thus there was no incentive on the part of such manufacturers to keep down prices, for it was a great temptation to increase costs, and some

²¹ Ramsdell, "Confederate Government and the Railroads," 804-805.

²² Charles W. Ramsdell, "The Control of Manufacturing by the Confederate Government," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, VIII (December, 1921).

firms were suspected of padding their expense accounts. The situation was made more serious by the fact that while some exemptions were vitally needed to keep up production, the number of men who escaped conscription by needless exemptions reduced the ranks of the army. On the basis of reports received up to November, 1863, from Virginia, Georgia, and North and South Carolina, the Bureau of Conscription computed the number of exempts as being fifty percent of the total number of soldiers sent to the front. In Georgia alone, the number of exemptions amounted to twenty-nine percent of the number of troops in the field, according to one report.²³

Part of this manpower shortage could have been eliminated, if business and the military had not been forced into open competition as two separate interests, but the ghost of Calhoun again cast its shadow over Confederate administration, and the men of Richmond yielded to constitutional theory. It was not a total scarcity of manpower that crushed manufacturing in the South, but rather a failure to make proper use of what was available. A well organized and centrally controlled system of labor allotment would have held from the armies only the requisite numbers needed for effective production in each industry. The South had large supplies of unskilled labor that could have been more effectively used to relieve pressure from skilled workers. A well organized corps of slave laborers could have released more farmers for military duty, but the attitude of Southern slaveholders towards utilizing slaves in the war effort made this difficult. Slaveowners were generally unwilling to spare their slaves for work on trenches, railroads, or other necessary duties. They justified their reluctance on varied grounds: slave impressment interfered with their property rights; the amount of government compensation was usually less than the value of the slave's labor; and their slaves were needed at home to grow grain instead of away constructing parapets. Curiously enough, these planters knew that the over-

²³ Ibid., 234-37; Albert Burton Moore, *Conscription and Conflict in the Confederacy* (New York, 1924), 56-68, 94; *War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, 70 vols. (Washington, 1880-1901), ser. 4, II, 160-68, 740, 959; A Sellew Roberts, "The Peace Movement in North Carolina," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*; XI (September, 1924), 194.

throw of the Confederacy would mean an end of slavery. Yet, as defeat became more likely, the Southern planter became more unwilling to send his negroes to help stave off invasion.²⁴

Perhaps these men were weary of seeing the defensive line of the Confederacy slowly receding, for Federal occupation exemplified that economic and military success were interdependent. An army needed food, but food producers needed the success of the army. When Sheridan swept through Rockingham County, Virginia, on his valley raid, he destroyed 450 barns, 100,000 bushels of wheat, 50,000 bushels of corn, and carried away over 5,000 head of livestock, seriously reducing the food producing areas for Lee's army. The Federal blockade cut Louisiana sugar planters off from their market in 1861 which produced a sugar shortage, and the industry suffered further disruption when Nathaniel P. Bank's defeated army, retreating from Mansfield and Pleasant Hill, destroyed sugarhouses, gins, and factories in the Red River country.²⁵

Such devastation created a loss of public support, and the cycle of military and economic interdependence continued. The military and economic interests of the South were never reconciled. The South's colonial economy forced the sacrifice of one interest to another. For example, the building of more railroads created iron shortages in the manufacture of cannon; yet without railroads these same cannon often were not utilized effectively. Perhaps more centralized control of the Southern economy would have reduced much of this friction between the war and business efforts. However, the state rights attitude of both central and state political leaders prevented harmonious relations between these divergent interests. Perhaps the great dilemma of Confederate history thus was that its conservative leadership failed to combine operations of Confederate military and economic efforts. Instead, these two factors worked against each other. Military losses hampered the economic efforts; in turn economic losses were felt on the battlefield.

²⁴ Moore, *Conscription and Conflict*, 52-56, 62, 110-13; Bell Irvin Wiley, *Southern Negroes 1861-1865* (New Haven and London, 1938), 123-25.

²⁵ Richmond *Enquirer*, November 15, 1864; Charles P. Roland, *Louisiana Sugar Plantations During the American Civil War* (Leiden, 1957), 42-43, 45, 47, 65.

THE CONFEDERATE STATES NAVY AT MOBILE, 1861 TO AUGUST, 1864

By

William N. Still, Jr.

During the early months of the Civil War Mobile was generally ignored by the Confederate Navy Department. Naval affairs were left in the hands of Lieutenant James D. Johnston, CSN, with the title of "Keeper of the Light House," and Colin J. McRae, who acted as civilian agent for the department. Fortunately, both were men of ability and realized the urgency of creating a naval force for the defense of the bay. By the fall of 1861 two vessels, the *Alert* and *Florida*,¹ had been converted into gunboats, and contracts were signed for the construction of two light-draft warships. Johnston and Mcae were also instrumental in persauding the Navy Department to negotiate for two more ironclads to be built at Selma, and the state of Alabama to build another.

The Alabama General Assembly on November 8, 1861 passed an act appropriating \$150,000 for the "construction of an iron clad gunboat and ram for the defense of the bay and harbor of Mobile," and appointed a committee to superintend construction of the vessel. In December this group purchased the *Baltic*, a lighter used to transport cotton from Mobile to ships in the lower bay. By January, 1862, the work of converting the *Baltic* into an ironclad was well underway. Conversion was completed in May and the vessel was turned over to the Confederate government on the twenty-seventh of that month.²

¹ The *Florida's* name was changed to *Selma* in September, 1862.

² *Acts of the Second Called Session, 1861, and of the First Regular Annual Session General Assembly of Alabama Held in the City of Montgomery* (Montgomery: Montgomery Advertiser Book and Job Office, 1862), 211-213; *Baltic* Construction Papers, Military Records Division, Navy Records, File 34 (Department of Archives and History, Montgomery, Alabama); Mallory to Baker, March 5, 1863, construction at Mobile file, Confederate Subject and Area File, National Archives Record Group 45 (National Archives, Washington, D. C.). For Johnston's role in building naval vessels in Alabama see Johnston to Wright, February 11, 1861, in James D. Johnston folder, (Naval History Division, Department of the Navy, National Archives Building, Washington, D. C.); Governor Shorter to Mallory,

In February, 1862, Captain Victor Randolph, CSN, assumed command of the Mobile Station with Johnston as his executive officer. Randolph was described by one of his officers as "A charming old gentleman in the parlor, very amiable and very kind and polite in his manners and you cannot help liking him, but he is sixty-five years old and hasn't all the fire of youth . . . and at best [is] never remarkable for energy or decision. . . . We are without a head, there is no controlling spirit."³ Although he was the first naval officer of flag rank to resign his commission in the United States Navy to join the South, his Confederate career was jeopardized from the beginning because of animosity between him and the secretary of the navy Stephen R. Mallory. He tried, in fact, to block Mallory's appointment through correspondence with members of the provisional Congress, and later attempted to pressure the naval committee of the first regular Congress into investigating Mallory. He refused to divulge his reasons, although later he confided to a fellow officer: "I have made no statement of the Hon. Secretary's disloyalty which I did not hold myself prepared to prove." Nevertheless, the matter was dropped when Mallory gave Randolph command of the naval batteries on York River.⁴ Strained relations between the two continued, and later when Franklin Buchanan, his junior, was appointed admiral, the embittered captain wrote to several congressmen complaining of this "slight." "Mr. Mallory would never employ me, or allow me to be placed in a position by which I might be brought honorably before the country, or where I would distinguish myself in my profession," he lamented to one congressman.⁵ But as commander of the

October 15, 1862, Shorter Executive Papers, Letterbook, 1861-63 (Alabama Department of Archives and History, Montgomery); Johnston to Mitchell, May 22, 1863, John K. Mitchell Papers (Virginia Historical Society, Richmond). For McRae see various letters from September, 1861 to June, 1862, in the Colin J. McRae Collection (Alabama Department of Archives and History, Montgomery); Edwin Layton, "Colin J. McRae and the Selma Arsenal," *Alabama Review*, XVIII (1966), 129-30; Charles S. Davis, *Colin J. McRae: Confederate Financial Agent* (Tuscaloosa, 1961). Johnston actually superintended the construction of the *Baltic*, *Morgan*, and *Gaines*, and commanded the *Baltic* before receiving command of the *Tennessee*.

³ Charles Graves to cousin, May 1, 1862, Charles Graves Papers (Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina Library, Chapel Hill).

⁴ The appointment was made eight months after he first entered the Confederate naval service.

⁵ Randolph to Drepe (?), August 18, 1862, construction at Mobile file, National

Mobile Station and Squadron from February until September, 1862, Randolph certainly had every opportunity to "distinguish" himself.

Randolph was ordered to open communications and to convoy ships between Mobile and New Orleans by way of Grant's Pass and Mississippi Sound. Flag Officer George N. Hollins was to cooperate with his Lake Pontchartrain flotilla. The plan was never carried out because the army refused to remove the obstructions placed in Grant's Pass by the Confederates, and Hollins had all that he could handle in the Mississippi River.⁶

The Mobile commander was also to disperse the Federal forces blockading the main entrance to the Bay as soon as the gunboats under construction were completed. By the beginning of April the *Morgan* and *Gaines* were ready, and on the night of the third these vessels, along with the *Florida* and *Alert*, made a half-hearted attack against the blockaders. After firing for several hours in their general direction, the Mobile Squadron withdrew. Scharf called this affair a "reconnaissance," but the executive officer of the flagship *Morgan* wrote that it was a planned attack and called Randolph an "old coward" for not pushing it.⁷ This was the only attempt to strike at the Union blockading force off Mobile in 1862, in spite of the weakness of the Union force there. The flag officer contented himself with guarding the passes while urging the department to provide iron-clads. He called his wooden gunboats "cockle shells," almost worthless as fighting ship because "one well directed shot would cripple [any of them]."⁸

Archives Record Group 45; see also to Yancy, August 18, 1862, construction at Mobile file, National Archives Record Group 45.

⁶ Graves to Maggie, April 21, 1862, Graves Papers; Randolph to Buchanan, February 15, 1862, construction at Mobile file, National Archives Record Group 45.

⁷ Graves to cousin, April 6, 1862, Graves Papers; Scharf, *Confederate States Navy*, 536; see also Johnston to Mitchell, June 19, 1863, Mitchell Papers.

⁸ The *Morgan's* first commanding officer agreed as to her weakness: "Her steam pipes are entirely above the water line, and her boilers and magazines partly above it, so we have the comfortable appearance of being blown up or scalded by any chance shot that may not take off our heads." C. H. Kennedy to Charles Ellis, n. d., Charles Ellis Papers (Duke University Library, Durham, North Carolina). The blockade off Mobile was practically ineffective during most of 1863. Most of the blockaders were sailing vessels unable to stop steamers. *Official Records, Navies*, Ser. I, XIX, 102-03; Charles L. Lewis, *David Glasgow Farragut* (2 vols., Annapolis, 1941-43), II, 136.

In August, 1862, Mallory relieved Randolph of his command and ordered him to Jackson, Mississippi, to stand trial by court martial. What the charges were and whether or not he was actually tried have not been ascertained, but he never held an active command in the Confederate navy again.

Admiral Buchanan, the new flag officer, was at that time the most respected officer in Confederate naval service. When the crusty old warrior, limping from wounds received while commanding the *Virginia*, arrived in Mobile, one officer admirably wrote, "Buchanan is a *man* and a *Commander*." Another one noted, "warm work is expected in a few days."

Though aggressive and anxious to challenge his adversary beyond the Bay, Buchanan was not imprudent. Shortly after reaching Mobile, the new flag officer reported that he found the squadron "in a state of efficiency, highly creditable to their officers and the service." But he also cautioned the navy secretary that the squadron would be no match in an engagement with Union ironclads.⁹ All that he could hope for was that the expected attack would be delayed long enough to allow completion of the two ironclads under construction.

On May 1, 1862, Henry D. Bassett, a Mobile shipbuilder, had signed a contract to construct two ironclad floating batteries for \$100,000 each. The first of these, the *Tuscaloosa*, was to be completed by July 1, 1862, and the second, the *Huntsville*, thirty days later. Selma, a small city about 150 miles up the Alabama River from Mobile, was chosen as the construction site, probably because of the influence of Colin McRae. An iron foundry and arsenal were being developed at Selma by McRae, and he promised to provide the guns, boilers, and armor plate for the vessels.

In August, Commander Ebenezer Farrand, who was engaged in selecting defensive sites on the Alabama and Tombigbee Rivers, was ordered to obtain suitable locations for shipyards and to initiate the building of additional ironclads. On August 19, he contracted for one large side-wheel ironclad and two

⁹ Buchanan to Forrest, September 12, 1862, Franklin Buchanan Letterbook, (Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina.)

150 foot propeller ironclads to be built at Ovens Bluff on the Tombigbee River. Early in September he negotiated for another side-wheel vessel to be built at Montgomery, and a powerful ram at Selma. By the time Buchanan arrived in Alabama, seven ironclads either were under construction or were on the verge of being laid down. When these vessels were completed and commissioned, he would have eight armored warships, counting the *Baltic*, to defend the Bay and to challenge Union control of the Gulf and the Mississippi River. For the next eighteen months the task of finishing and manning them absorbed most of his time.¹⁰

The two ironclads building at Selma were behind schedule—three-fifths completed at the end of the stipulated time—but Farrand reported to Buchanan at the end of September that the first one would be ready in about six weeks. Within two weeks, however, his optimism had decreased considerably: "I cannot write with the least encouragement with regard to the completion of the floating batteries here. They are at almost a dead stand still waiting for iron plating and machinery . . . not a particle of machinery for either and only the boiler for one has been received." In passing on this information to the navy secretary, Buchanan wrote, "this deprives me of the use of these boats for at least two months, which I regret, as I relied principally upon them to prevent the passage of the enemy through the obstructions in the Bay."¹¹

The power plants for the several Alabama ironclads were originally to have been built at the naval iron works in Columbus, Georgia, but the Columbus establishment lacked the facilities to equip all the ships. In October, 1862, McRae wrote to the Shelby Iron Company to forward twenty-five tons of pig iron to Columbus. When two-thirds of this order was held up at Selma by inadequate transportation facilities, McRae sent an urgent message to the army quartermaster to ship the iron immediately, as "this iron . . . is required to complete the engines and machinery for the floating batteries at this place

¹⁰ Farrand was placed in charge of all shipbuilding in the state, but he was evidently subordinated to Buchanan. Mallory to Farrand, August 1, 1862, Ebenezer Farrand folder, BZ File; Mallory to Farrand, September 2, 1862, Area file, National Archives Record Group 45.

¹¹ October 15, 1862, Buchanan Letterbook.

[Selma]¹² By January, 1863 the machinery for the *Tuscaloosa* was installed, but the *Huntsville's* boilers and engine failed to arrive before the vessel was towed to Mobile. The Tombigbee vessels received their power plants in the latter part of 1863 and early 1864. Machinery for the *Tennessee*, the large ram building at Selma, and the *Nashville*, the side-wheel ironclad on the stocks at Montgomery, was obtained from Mississippi riverboats stranded up the Yazoo River.¹³

The inadequate supply of iron also retarded armoring the vessels. When Selma was selected as suitable for a navy yard, one of its supposed advantages was the availability of iron and of the facilities to manufacture it into plate. McRae was under contract with the Navy Department to erect a rolling mill and foundry, while the Shelby Iron Company was rapidly converting its facilities in order to roll plate. By the fall of 1862 this situation had changed considerably. McRae's rolling mill was delayed indefinitely, and although Shelby had begun to turn out armor plate, pig iron was becoming increasingly scarce. A sufficient quantity of plate arrived in December, 1862, and January, 1863, from the Scofield and Markham works in Atlanta to cover the *Tuscaloosa*. Both the Atlanta and Shelby works supplied armor for the *Huntsville* and *Tennessee*, but the three Tombigbee vessels were never finished because of lack of plate, and the *Nashville* was only partly clad with armor taken from the *Baltic*.¹⁴

¹² McRae to Harris, October 31, 1862, McRae Collection.

¹³ The detailed survey of the *Tennessee* made by a board of Union naval officers after she was captured indicated that her machinery came from the riverboat *Alonzo Child*. This is apparently a mistake for the machinery from this boat was not removed until December, 1863, to be transported to Selma; probably to be installed in a fourth ironclad under construction there. The *Tennessee's* machinery was being installed in the summer and fall of 1863—at the time the *Alonzo Child* was being stripped of her power plant. On December 15, 1863, Buchanan wrote, "will try the machinery tomorrow or the next day." *Official Records, Navies*, Ser. I, XX, 856; see also Farrand to Engineer G. W. Fisher, March 6, April 13, and June 1, 1863, construction at Selma file, National Archives Record Group 45; Farrand to DeHaven, December 30, 1863, in *Alonzo Child* folder, Vessel File, National Archives Record Group 109; Farrand to Whitesides, December 30, 1863, Confederate Navy Brigade Personal Papers, National Archives Record Group 109; *Savannah Morning News*, December 23, 1863.

¹⁴ *Official Records, Navies*, Ser. I, XXI, 600; Simms to Jones, July 5, 1864, Area file, National Archives Record Group 45; Farrand to Myers, December, 1862,

On February 7, 1863 Farrand wired Governor John Gill Shorter of Alabama that the *Tuscaloosa* and *Huntsville* had been successfully launched, "amid enthusiastic cheering." Three weeks later the hull of the much larger *Tennessee* slid into the muddy waters of the Alabama River. Lieutenant Johnston in Selma who was to take the vessel to Mobile for completion, gave this account of her launching:

About midday there was heard the sound of a gun, and immediately afterwards the *Tennessee* was shot into the swift current like an arrow, and the water had risen to such a height that she struck in her course the corner of a brick warehouse, situated on an adjoining bluff and demolished it. This was her first and only experience as a ram.¹⁵

The *Tennessee* and *Huntsville* were launched before completion in order to take advantage of the prevailing high water. Buchanan ordered the vessels to Mobile immediately, by tow if necessary, because of the "danger of the river falling so much that [they] . . . cannot cross the shoals" The *Tuscaloosa* steamed to the port city under her own power, but the other two had to be towed by the pride of the Alabama River, the magnificent steamboat *Southern Republic*. The trip down the twisting river with its steep banks took over a week. Because of snags and the difficulty of towing, the boat and her charge tied up at a landing during the night. The appearance of the *Southern Republic* with her calliope shrilling "Dixie" always drew a crowd of curious people, and the presence of the strange-looking craft under tow added to the interest.¹⁶

construction at Selma file, National Archives Record Group 45; Farrand to Jones, December 23, 1862; McCarrick to Kennan, January 12, 1863; Farrand to Hunt, January 25, 1863, (copy) Shelby Iron Company Papers (University of Alabama Library, Tuscaloosa).

¹⁵ From an address delivered by James D. Johnston before the Georgia Historical Society, copy in National Archives Record Group 45.

¹⁶ Montgomery *Daily Advertiser*, March 8, 1863; Ware to Pierce, May 7, 1863, Ware Letterbooks, National Archives Record Group 45; Buchanan to Comstock, February 12, 1863, Area file, National Archives Record Group 45; Memorandum from deserter February 24, 1863, Gustavus Fox Papers, (New York Historical Society, New York City). For a description of the *Southern Republic* see Thomas C. DeLeon, *Four Years in Rebel Capitals* (New York, 1962), 57-63; and William H. Russell, *My Diary North and South*, ed. Fletcher Pratt (New York, 1954), 103-07.

Once the vessels reached Mobile, Buchanan, with his driving energy, tackled the job of getting them fitted out and ready for action. "I have neither flag-captain nor flag-lieutenant, nor midshipman for aides; consequently, I have all the various duties to attend to from the grade of midshipman up. My office duties increase daily, which keeps me in the office until 3 o'clock, and then in the afternoon I visit the navy yard, navy store, ordnance, etc. . . .," he confided to Catesby Jones. Fearful of being attacked before his squadron was ready, Buchanan was reluctant to delegate responsibility and hypercritical of everything and everyone connected with the ships under construction. On June 13 he wrote: "The idleness of the workmen has caused remarks by citizens and others and I have been obliged [*sic*] to make a short speech but a *strong one* to the men, and have also stirred up Mr. [Joseph] Pierce and Engineer [George W.] Fisher I spare no one if he is delinquent." On July 5: "Old Pierce the constructor can plan work, perhaps, but he cannot control men. He is a perfect old woman. I have gone on much further since he left here Pierce delayed the work [on the *Tennessee*] by putting on the wrong iron."

"Old Buck" was just as hard on the civilians, both workers and contractors. When a number of carpenters struck at Selma and travelled to Mobile looking for work, marines met their boat, arrested them, and hauled them off to the guard house. When the admiral threatened to turn them over to the conscription officer, they agreed to return to work. Pep talks and threats apparently did not motivate the workers enough, at least as far as Buchanan was concerned, for in August he had all of them conscripted and detailed to work under his orders.¹⁷ The contractors, too, came in for their share of his criticism. After the *Nashville* reached Mobile in June, Buchanan complained frequently of their absence. In August, two months after the side-wheel ironclad reached the city, he reported to Mallory: "Great delay on the *Nashville* is caused for want of material, which could be procured without difficulty if either of the contractors were here to attend to it, only one of them, Mr. Montgomery has been here, and then only *one day*"

¹⁷ Buchanan to Mallory, September 20, 1863, Buchanan Letterbook; Buchanan to Mitchell, June 13, 1863, Mitchell Papers.

Buchanan was also displeased with the builders at the Tombigbee River yard. The site had been ill-chosen; its location near a swamp resulted in a great deal of sickness and dissension among the workmen. On October 1, 1863 Buchanan informed the naval secretary that one of the contractors was unpopular with the workmen and the other "a hard drinker [who] . . . spends much of his time in Mobile." With the department's approval, the flag officer took the vessels out of the contractor's hands, appointed a naval officer to supervise the shipyard, and commissioned Sidney Porter as a naval constructor. Porter was the former contractor who drank and was absent much of the time, and Buchanan hoped to control his negligence by subjecting him to naval discipline. Considering these problems, and remembering that Buchanan, like many professional military officers, found working with civilians disagreeable, it is not surprising that he wrote in January, 1864, "I have lost all confidence in *all* contractors."¹⁸

Under the flag officer's constant surveillance, the vessels as they arrived in Mobile received their armor, guns, and crews; after a shakedown cruise they were commissioned. The *Tuscaloosa* made her trial run early in April, 1863, followed two weeks later by the *Huntsville*. By summer both of these floating batteries were operational, although Buchanan decided not to send them into the Bay because of their slowness. With 125 pounds of steam pressure, the *Tuscaloosa* made only two and a half knots.

On June 18, 1863, the hull of the *Nashville* arrived from Montgomery and was towed to the navy yard for completion. Her 270 foot length and 62 foot beam gave her an impressive appearance—one officer after visiting the vessel wrote that he was "perfectly delighted with her. Never was so much pleased in my life. She is a tremendous monster The *Tennessee* is insignificant along side of her"¹⁹

¹⁸ to Mitchell, January 26, 1864, Mitchell Papers; see also Buchanan to Mallory, October 1, 1863, Buchanan Letterbook; Buchanan to Farrand, December 1, 1863, Area file, National Archives Record Group 45; Farrand to Buchanan, April 5, 1864, Ebenezer Farrand folder, Citizens File, National Archives Record Group 109; Voucher, November 19, 1863, construction at Selma file, National Archives Record Group 45.

¹⁹ Gift to Ellen Shackelford, June 19, 1863, Gift Papers (Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina).

Buchanan hoped that the *Nashville* and *Tennessee* would be ready by the end of the summer, but the *Tennessee* would not be commissioned until February of 1864, and the *Nashville* more than six months afterwards. Because of the problem of acquiring sufficient plate for armor, the flag officer determined to complete one vessel at a time. The *Nashville*, naked without her covering of iron armor, lay moored to a wharf, while the *Tennessee* was completed. In September Buchanan reported: "The work on the *Tennessee* has progressed for some weeks past There is much delay for want of plate and bolt iron; it was impossible to iron both sponsons at the same time, as the vessel had to be careened several feet to enable them to put the iron on; even then several of the workmen were waist deep in the water to accomplish it The work has been carried on night and day when it could be done advantageously The first course of iron and part of the second are on one side of the *Tennessee* and nearly all the first course on the opposite side." By December, 1863 she was ready, and Buchanan wrote wishfully, "if I only had her guns and crews, and had her across the short water on the bar, I would be satisfied it would not be long before she should try her strength."²⁰ But guns were not available and would not be for some time.

Originally, the ordnance for the Mobile vessels was to have been supplied by the iron works Colin McRae had acquired in Selma. The contract for the casting of cannon signed between representatives of the War and Navy Departments with McRae in February, 1862, stipulated that the first guns were to be delivered by September 1 of that year. It was, however, January, 1864, before the first piece was forwarded to Mobile. In June, 1863, the foundry had come under exclusive naval control with the former executive officer of the *Virginia*, Catesby ap R. Jones, as its commanding officer. From the casting of the first experimental gun a month after he took charge, until the spring of 1865, nearly two hundred guns were manufactured.

Because the Selma foundry was unable to provide the *Huntsville* and *Tuscaloosa* with guns, other means had to be found. Six, including two 42-pounders, two 32-pounder smooth-

²⁰ to Mitchell, December 11, 1863, Mitchell Papers.

bores, and two 32-pounder rifles, were obtained from the army as temporary batteries, and later two 7-inch Brooke guns were sent from Tredegar and two more from Charleston.²¹

The origin of the *Tennessee's* battery of six guns is uncertain. Presumably part of it came from the Selma foundry which shipped its first two 7-inch Brooke rifles to Mobile early in January, 1864. But it is highly unlikely—as some historians state—that her entire battery came from the Selma works, at least not at first. On January 26 Buchanan wrote that her battery was complete; and records of the naval iron works do not indicate that additional guns were shipped to Mobile during January. More than likely the other four guns (6.4-inch Brooke rifles) came from two stationary floating batteries in the harbor, for that is what Buchanan proposed to the Navy Department.²²

The *Nashville's* armament was unusual for a Confederate ironclad. Because her builders increased the forward inclination of the shield to twenty nine degrees, more than the specifications called for, the 7-inch bow gun had to be lengthened several inches. The *Nashville* was also one of the first Confederate ironclads to use 7-inch guns in her broadside. The standard broadside was the 6.4 inch Brooke, but the introduction of a new type of carriage enabled the side-wheel armored ship to carry 7-inch guns.²³

Finding seamen to man the ships was probably the most irksome problem Buchanan encountered. He wrote dozens of letters to Mallory and to the various officers that headed the

²¹ The latter two brought on a controversy between the Navy Department and Beauregard that went all the way to the President before being decided in favor of the navy. Tredegar Foundry Sale Book, December 3, 1862, Tredegar Rolling Mill and Foundry Collection (Virginia State Library, Richmond); Buchanan to Minor, October 9, 1862, Buchanan Letterbook.

²² Buchanan to Mitchell, October 7, 1863, Mitchell Papers; Buchanan to Mallory, October 1, 1863, Buchanan Letterbook; Walter Stephens, "The Brooke Guns from Selma," *Alabama Historical Quarterly*, XX (1958), 465. Johnston states that her battery came from Selma, James D. Johnston, "The Ram *Tennessee* at Mobile Bay," *Battles and Leaders*, IV, 401.

²³ Brooke to Catesby Jones, January 15, 1864; Jones to McCorkle, January 28, 1864; McCorkle to Jones, February 1, 27, 1864; Brooke to Buchanan, January 21, 1864, Selma Foundry Papers, National Archives Record Group 45.

Office of Orders and Detail requesting men. He complained frequently of his inability to obtain men from the army. For example, on April 6, 1863 he wrote: "I am much in want of men and unless the Secretary of War and the Generals are more liberal toward the Navy in permitting transfers from the Army to the Navy we cannot man either the Gun boats or floating batteries." He told Augusta J. Evans, a well known writer in Mobile, that of 650 applications to the War Department for seamen in the army to be detailed for naval service, only twenty had been approved. . . .²⁴ He did receive a sufficient number of men from the army to fill his ship complements, and contrary to his complaints, most military commanders, particularly General D. H. Maury at Mobile, were cooperative. Perhaps they were impressed by the admiral's rank and reputation, or by his pugnacious stubbornness, for military commanders elsewhere were notoriously uncooperative in detailing men to the navy. On December 12, 1863, Maury asked the Adjutant General: "Please call the attention of the Secretary of War to the importance of affording every aid to the naval commander here in procuring the transfer of men from the Army to the Navy."²⁵ In March, 1864 he offered Buchanan artillery details to man the guns in the naval vessels if the flag officer decided on an attack before his crews were completed. Eventually about 150 men were detailed from a Tennessee unit to serve on the *Tennessee*.

Although these Tennesseans were praised during and after the war by Buchanan as well as Johnston, the admiral was not entirely pleased with the personnel of the squadron. "There are on board . . . these vessels some of the greatest vagabonds you will ever read of," he related to Mitchell. "One or two such hung during this time would have a wonderful effect." Buchanan's opinion was probably inevitable considering the fact that a large percentage of men who manned his ships, as well as those throughout the Confederate navy, were not seamen; they had never been to sea or experienced the life of a jack tar in a ship-of-war in the old navy. Only a well-disciplined ship was a good ship to a naval officer steeped in the tradition

²⁴ Quoted in Clement Eaton, *A History of the Southern Confederacy* (New York, 1954), 325.

²⁵ War Department Papers, National Archives Record Group 109.

of Stephen Decatur and Oliver Hazard Perry. Buchanan was a disciplinarian. "If we could use the lash we should have no trials for desertion or thefts—I never knew solitary confinement to have any effect upon a crew."²⁶ Buchanan strongly disapproved of the regulations against corporal punishment in the Confederate navy and so informed Secretary Mallory.

The flag officer was not alone in his censorious opinion of the enlisted personnel in the Mobile Squadron. An officer reporting on board the *Morgan* for the first time was shocked at her crew. "To call the *Morgan's* crew sailors would be disgracing the name," he wrote with a touch of xenophobia; "Out of a hundred and fifty not one is even *American*, much less a Southerner. We have Irish, Dutch, Norwegian, Danes, French, Spanish, Italian, Mexicans, Indians, and Mutezos [*sic*]*—a set of desperate cut throats. But worst of all their loyalty is doubtful I could go into the country and get ten Southerners and teach them more in one week about seamanship and gunnery than these fellows will learn in twelve months.*"²⁷ A similar description was given of the *Selma's* crew by one of her officers. By June, 1864, there were more than 800 enlisted men and 133 officers in the squadron, enough to man the vessels and station.

Buchanan appealed almost as frequently for officers as for enlisted men, and characteristically, he was constantly deriding the officers' competence. Many officers he wrote, "appear to think that the Navy was made for their *pleasure and accommodation*, and I take good care to assure to them that such is not the case." He could be intemperate and vituperative in his remarks about individual officers, and rank, age, or experience meant little to him. "_____ is a very nice gentleman, but he is not enough of a *navy officer* for me. He has never felt much interest in the life." "Why did you send me old.....? I don't think I ever had an officer of so little force. *He is of no earthly use to me.*" "I am obliged [*sic*] to ask a court of Inquiry on _____. You are aware that he never was worth anything in the old Navy." "_____'s Lieutenants and officers are dissatisfied with him he makes enemies of nearly all [of them]"

²⁶ to Mitchell, June 22, 1863, Mitchell Papers.

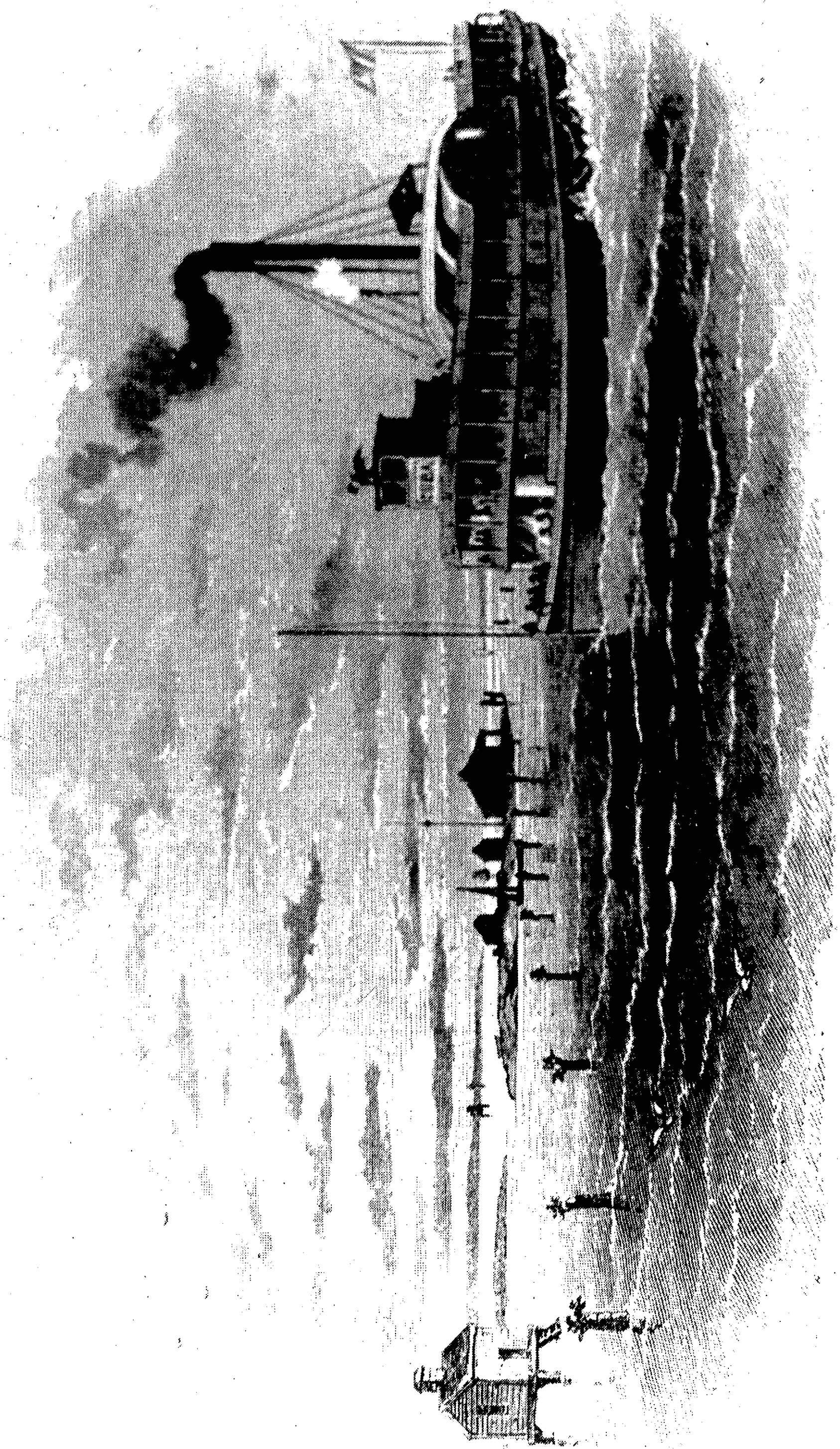
²⁷ Graves to cousin, March 2, 1862, Graves Papers.

"_____ is nothing—not worth his salt." "_____ is here on board the *Huntsville*—wish he was anywhere else."

Although to his officers he was much more free with his criticisms, he could give compliments. Farrand was "respected," Lieutenant George W. Gift a "fine officer," Lieutenant John R. Eggleston "a clever man." "I cannot get along here without [Johnston] . . . he is never idle; he is constantly employed with matters connected with the vessels of the Squadron . . . a thousand things which I cannot enumerate." He was so impressed with the abilities of Johnston that he persuaded the department to advance him over a number of senior officers to the rank of Commander in command of the *Tennessee*.²⁸

Any attempt to generalize about the attitude of the personnel in the Mobile Squadron towards Buchanan would be at best haphazard; there are no known records or diaries of enlisted men who served in the squadron, and personal papers from officers are scanty. Buchanan, however, was the type of personality that a young officer would write home about and we can gain some impressions from these letters. He was universally admired and respected for his courage and aggressiveness. In contrast to officers at other stations in the Confederacy, the officers in Mobile were apparently quite confident about what Buchanan would be able to do—right up to the battle of wrote to Mitchell, one officer "reported to me for duty in a *black coat*, said he had no uniform and *had* never had one since he received his appointment." Lieutenant Gift's admiration for the admiral dimmed somewhat over the uniform incident. "A week or more since the remnant of the crew of the *Arkansas* arrived here," he wrote, "Admiral Buchanan . . . [informed] the officers that he had no use for them, as they had no uniforms! . . . I have heard it said that with some ladies a sleek coat . . . with brass buttons has a wonderful effect, but I was not prepared to believe that with a man who claimed to be a warrior of age (there is no doubt of that) . . . From this, I

²⁸ For remarks about various officers see Buchanan to Mitchell, April 5, June 3, October 17, December 1, 3, 1863, and March 1, 1864, in the Mitchell Papers. See also letters and documents concerning a Court of Inquiry for two officers in the Mobile squadron, Wirt Family Papers (Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill).



GRANT'S PASS, NEAR MOBILE
from an early print

deduct that a fashionable tailor can do more to make a good officer in the estimation of old Buchanan than the great creating Prince of Heaven."²⁹ Gift was not altogether fair, for some of the *Arkansas's* crew were retained; but most of them were transferred to Charleston.

Mobile Bay. Most complaints concerned his strict observance of regulations, particularly about the wearing of uniforms. Shortly after taking command of the station, Buchanan issued an order requiring all officers to wear "at all times when on duty" the prescribed uniform. Elsewhere in the Confederacy, even in Richmond, wearing the grey uniform, although required by regulations, was not strictly enforced. Many officers who had been in the old navy simply changed the buttons on their blue coats. Buchanan, however, was indignant when, as he

In spite of Old Buck's penchant for regulations and discipline; in spite of the discomforts and ill-health that were always present while serving on ironclads in a semi-tropical area, life was generally pleasant for the officers of the Mobile Squadron. Mobile, with a population of approximately 25,000 inhabitants, was one of the most cosmopolitan cities in the Confederacy. William Howard Russell, the famous correspondent of the *London Times*, noted in his diary: "The city . . . abounds in oyster saloons, drinking houses, lager-beer and wine-shops, and gambling and dancing places . . . the most foreign-looking city I have yet seen in the States."³⁰ Naval duty was such that officers and men could take advantage of the many diversions in the city. The wooden vessels of the squadron rotated at guarding the passes to the Bay—a tour down the Bay lasting for two weeks to a month. When in harbor they usually anchored near the center of the city—opposite the post office and Battle House hotel. Gift described a typical day at anchor in the harbor: "We are in four watches, which gives me two days on duty and two days off. On my liberty days I go on

²⁹ Gift to Ellen, August 2, 1863, Gift Papers; see also Simms to Jones, March 4, 20, 1864, Area file, National Archives Record Group 45.

³⁰ Russell, *My Diary, North and South*, 108. Other wartime descriptions of Mobile can be found in De Leon, *Four Years in Rebel Capitals*, 71-73; FitzGerald Ross, *Cities and Camps of the Confederate States*, ed. Richard Harwell (Urbana, 1958), 193-94; Arthur Freemantle, *The Freemantle Diary*, ed. Walter Lord (Boston, 1954), 103-04.

shore at half past nine and find some friends and acquaintances with whom I consume the time until 2:00 P.M. I then return on board to dinner (and by the way we live very well) and remain until after quarters at 4 and then go ashore until tea time. It seems precisely like living a very short distance from the city."

The war had little effect on social activities in the city. The genteel custom of calling upon certain prominent families in the city was still customary and naval officers frequented the homes of Augusta Evans, Madame Le Vert, and others. The navy reciprocated by holding ship-board balls and dinners, and by taking moonlight cruises down the Bay. The old admiral himself did not disdain such affairs; a journalist describing a river boat excursion which included the governor of Alabama, General Maury, and Buchanan, wrote: "A very good band of music from one of the regiments of the garrison played, and dancing was soon got up in the splendid saloon Admiral Buchanan, who was looking on, joined in this, and naturally by doing so created a great deal of confusion and merriment, at which he was in high glee."³¹

Social duties were a tonic for the monotonous but normal wartime duty of waiting. Occasionally, some excitement would be generated when a blockade runner would slip into the Bay. The Confederate steamers would then fire a few shells to discourage the blockaders from venturing too close. This respite was only temporary, however, and by 1864 blockade running had slowed down to a trickle.

On February 16, 1864, the *Tennessee* was placed in commission. Considered by many, including Alfred T. Mahan, to be the most powerful ironclad built from the keel up within the Confederacy, she was slightly over two hundred feet in overall length with a rather broad beam of forty-eight feet.

³¹ Ross, *Cities and Camps of the Confederate States*, 196. For social activities in Mobile see Gift to Ellen, June 13, August 2, 1863, Gift Papers; Grimball to mother, October 10, 25, 1862, John Grimball Collection (Duke University Library, Durham); George C. Waterman, "Notable Naval Events of the War," *Confederate Veteran*, VII (1899), 450; Mary Waring, *Miss Waring's Journal: 1863 and 1865*, ed. Thad Holt, Jr. (Mobile, 1964), 4.

Mallory originally had sent his most aggressive senior officer to Mobile not only to raise the blockade off that city, but also to cooperate in a combined effort to regain New Orleans and the lower Mississippi River. Several plans were suggested which included, at one time or another, the cooperation of armor-clads building in Europe, as well as the armies of first Beuregard, later Joseph E. Johnston, and finally Kirby Smith. Any plan to attack New Orleans hinged upon the availability of a powerful force of ironclads, and by the late spring of 1864, it was crystal clear that such a force would not be ready in the near future. The three vessels under construction on the Tombigbee were without armor, and no armor was available; the *Tuscaloosa* and *Huntsville* were unseaworthy; the *Nashville* was nearly ready, but she was weak because of her exposed wheels, slow speed, and inadequate armor. In order to provide her with a limited amount of armor (bow and forward part of the shield) plate had to be taken from the decrepit *Baltic*. The old converted cotton lighter and first ironclad in the Bay was so worm eaten that she was no longer seaworthy; "rotten as punk, . . . about as fit to go into action as a mud scow," her commanding officer described her. In brief, Buchanan's ironclad squadron for offensive operations consisted of one ship—the *Tennessee*. Unfortunately this vessel was the only ironclad that the flag officer had to defend the Bay against Farragut's attack early in August. The *Nashville* was too vulnerable, and the *Huntsville* and *Tuscaloosa*'s power plants were so weak that they would not have been able to escape back up the river in case of disaster. Buchanan was forced to face the powerful Union fleet with one ironclad and three small wooden gunboats.

THE LIFE OF RYLAND RANDOLPH AS SEEN THROUGH HIS LETTERS TO JOHN W. DUBOSE

By

Sarah Woolfolk Wiggins

Ryland Randolph was one of Alabama's most colorful newspapermen.¹ As editor of the *Tuskaloosa Independent Monitor*, 1867-1871, he gained wide reputation both within and outside of the South as a spokesman for Southern resistance to the forces of change wrought by Reconstruction in the South. In the post-war years he enjoyed the dubious prestige of editing the only Alabama newspaper suppressed by military order; of being the only Alabama citizen tried by military tribunal for attempted murder of a Negro; of being the only member of the Alabama legislature expelled while away on his honeymoon. Later Randolph continued his career as a journalist for other newspapers in Tuskaloosa and Birmingham, always creating controversy by his outspoken criticism of evil as he saw it, even within his own Democratic party in Alabama.

Despite Randolph's prominence during Reconstruction almost nothing has heretofore been known about his family background or about his personal life.² Such a vacuum may now be filled by information available in a series of Randolph's letters written to J. W. DuBose between May, 1900, and May, 1903; these are now in the DuBose papers in the Alabama Department of Archives and History. Three years before his death in 1903 at the age of sixty-seven, Randolph began this correspondence with DuBose, a war-ruined planter who had turned to newspaper work and subsequently to writing Alabama history. DuBose seems to have initiated the correspondence with Randolph by requesting information about prominent Alabamians for his own historical work. The two struck respon-

¹ The author wishes to acknowledge the assistance of the University of Alabama Research Committee for a broader project of which this paper is a part.

² The entry in Thomas M. Owen, *History of Alabama and Dictionary of Alabama Biography* (Chicago, 1921), IV, 1412, is the only biographical reference to Randolph in a standard Alabama history. Randolph is there noted as a journalist whose last residence before his death was Birmingham.

sive chords in each other—DuBose a man already deaf and Randolph a one-legged semi-invalid, both vitally interested in the history of Alabama.

Unfortunately, only Randolph's letters to DuBose have survived. Though written some forty years after most of the events had occurred, they reflect Randolph's remarkably accurate memory, as a comparison of the letters with the accounts of these episodes reported in the *Independent Monitor* demonstrates. Randolph's first letters to DuBose in May, 1900, answered queries made of him for family biographical information. Then as the correspondence warmed, Randolph reminisced in a lively style on many subjects; antebellum plantation life, naval adventures, Civil War campaigns, the University of Alabama during Reconstruction. A lapse occurred in the middle of the correspondence, a silence that lasted almost three years. It was during this period that Randolph's beloved wife, the former Katharine Clay Withers, died (probably in the summer of 1901), and Randolph in his grief seems to have gone into a state of deep shock.³ When the letters resumed in March, 1903, the tone was markedly different; Randolph was a broken man, weary in body and spirit. Once renewed, however, the correspondence blossomed.

Ryland Randolph was born October 28, 1835, in a log cabin in Mesopotamia, Alabama, near present-day Eutaw. His father, Victor M. Randolph, was born the son of Brett Randolph and Lucy Beverley in Prince Edward County, Virginia, in July, 1797. His education was begun at home, mainly through his mother and elder brothers, Edward B., Robert C., and Richard Randolph. Then after attending a local school, he was appointed at the age of sixteen as a midshipman in the U.S. Navy. His first service was under Commodore Stephen Decatur against the Algerian pirates. Later he was attached for some years to the frigate *Boston* in the Mediterranean squadron. As a twenty-five year old lieutenant he was ordered to Norfolk, Virginia, where he first met Augusta Granbery, the daughter of a merchant sea captain. They were married the following year.⁴

³ Lucy R. Taylor to J. W. DuBose, September 6, 1901, John W. DuBose Papers, (Alabama Department of Archives and History, Montgomery).

⁴ Ryland Randolph to J. W. DuBose, May 15, 1900, March 19, 1903, DuBose Papers.

Sometime after the birth of Ryland Randolph the family moved from Mesopotamia to the vicinity of Columbus, Mississippi, where his mother died in 1839 when Ryland was three and a half years old. Lieutenant Randolph then left the child in Norfolk in the care of his wife's mother and two sisters. In 1842 Victor M. Randolph received command of the U.S. sloop-of-war *Ontario*, and the boy accompanied his father on cruises aboard this ship.⁵

Next Ryland was sent to live at the home of an uncle, Dr. Robert Carter Randolph, who then owned "Oakleigh," a plantation near Greensboro, Alabama. Years later Ryland Randolph affectionately recalled his uncle and the comfortable antebellum life he knew on his uncle's plantation.

Dr. R. C. Randolph was a son of Brett Randolph and Lucy Beverley, and I think was born in Culpepper Co. Va. Immediately after his graduation in medicine he got the appointment of assistant surgeon in the U.S. Navy, serving a few years. He then resigned and located, for the practice of his profession, in New Orleans, where he soon enjoyed a very large practice, and became immensely popular. While still quite a young man he married a wealthy widow, Mrs. Farrar, *nee* Beverley, and his first cousin, and soon retired from the practice of his profession, locating on a plantation two miles from Greensboro, which he christened [*sic*] "Oakleigh". He commanded the respect of everybody and many stood in awe of him because of his great reserve and dignity. He was a very handsome man, about 5 ft. 10 in. high, straight black hair and deep blue eyes that seemed to penetrate one. Latterly, he led the life of an anchorite, [*sic*] and rarely appeared in public. A little off from the mansion was a room which contained his large and valuable library. This room he occupied day and night, rarely appearing except at meal-time. From being once the most genial and popular of men, he seems to have become, in the latter days of his life, austere and hermit-like in his tastes. He was an omnivorous reader and thoroughly well informed on all subjects, whether historical, scientific or political, though he never took any part in politics except to vote.

⁵ *Ibid.*

During the many years that I lived under his roof I never knew of his going inside of a church; and I think his religious views would have placed him in the ranks of the Free Thinkers of today. But he was always courteous to preachers, many of whom often visited Oakleigh because of church affiliations of others of the family. Indeed, I never knew my uncle to fail to request them to offer grace before meals, purely out of what he regarded as the demands of hospitality, and not because he had any faith in such observances, for, indeed, he had not. Notwithstanding his reserve, he was fond of children to the extent of contributing to their pleasures. For instance, in the '40s he would treat us, once a week, to a magic-lantern show, himself pushing the slides and explaining. The instrument cost several hundred dollars, and in those days was regarded as a great rarity. The room used was the extremely large parlor at Oakleigh, and whilst the inside was filled with whites—visitors & others—the doors and windows were occupied by the numerous house-servants and their children. Dr. Randolph never practiced his profession after locating near Greensboro, except that when occasion called for it, he did no inconsiderable amount of charity-practice. He was apparently a good business man in those days, for his property accumulated, both in land and slaves, despite the fact that Oakleigh was conducted in a style bordering on the extravagant. Apparently, every want and every fancy of the family was gratified so far as money could effect it.⁶

In another letter Ryland Randolph added:

He [Dr. R. C. Randolph] was the embodiment of hospitality, the prince of gracious hosts. Especially was he loyal to those of his own flesh and blood, matterless how remote the relationship, and I have frequently known of Oakleigh mansion filled for weeks and months at a time with friends and relatives. Often these latter were in straightened circumstances, and such always found a welcome asylum in his roomy, aristocratic-looking home. Amongst these who were entertained for many months, were Robert Beverley Randolph and his beautiful daughter Mittie. Now,

⁶ *Ibid.*, May 10, 1900.

this was the noted man who had pulled General (then President) Jackson's nose. Though quite a small boy, I well remember listening with interest to his account of that memorable event. Although a very old man when I saw him, he had a commanding appearance, and evidently had been very handsome as a lieutenant in the Navy, in which service he stood very high. His description of the Jackson incident differed widely from most of the so-called historical accounts, and he did just what any impulsive, high-toned gentleman would have done who saw himself robbed of his fair name and the robber in his presence. At that time Jackson was apotheosized from one end of the country to the other, and no matter under what provocation he were insulted, the ruling democracy were ready to rise up in arms against the individual having the audacity to offer such an affront. Like a great many naval officers, Lieut. Randolph was a poor man with a large family, and entirely dependent upon his profession for a livelihood. By the unjust action of the President, the lieutenant lost his reputation, which was far dearer to him than his salary, and such was the prejudice aroused against him that he could not secure honorable employment as a civilian. I perfectly remember how my young blood boiled with indignation at his ill-treatment, and how sorry I felt for the old man who had not only been cast adrift upon the unsympathetic world, but had been wounded in the most vital part of man—his reputation; besides had been hounded by the press that was almost wholly bitterly against him. The old man never recovered from the results of his seemingly rash act, and very soon after departing from Oakley [sic] died from what I always believed to be a broken heart.

Oakleigh was celebrated for the many entertainments given under its wide-spreading roof. The large number of people who enjoyed the family's friendship—the comparatively few who still live—must call to mind with immense pleasure and satisfaction the innumerable recherche dinings and evening parties participated in by them. Those guests from a distance of some miles frequently remained, under hospitable pressure, for days following these joyous occasions, affording the young folks of both sexes continued

pleasure in one another's society. An immense Chinese gong heralded the announcements of meals and also for rising from bed in the mornings. This instrument of Bedlam was so loud that it could be heard all over the large premises; but the well-known old butler "Billy" had performed this pleasing duty for so long a time that he had become an expert in the business; so that what at first almost shocked those close to the sound, eventually became sweet music, especially to those having good appetites. Mrs. Randolph was renowned for her splendid housekeeping, and never could there have been a more perfect system in household management. There were about a dozen house-servants at her beck and call, all thoroughly trained and made attractive by becoming apparel. Everywhere were indications of luxurious wealth; and whilst every reasonable desire was satisfied there was no wanton extravagance. A few hundred yards from the "Great-house", (as the negroes called the residence of their master) was the negro quarter, with its large population. This was laid off instreets and alleys, the same as a well-regulated town. Besides this home plantation, Dr. R. had two or three others near by and one in the Canebrake. Often when returning from hunting or fishing, tired and hungry, the inviting odors of bacon and greens would induce me to drop in at some old "aunty's" house, where she would invite me to eat; and those homely meals of bacon and greens, corn-pones and buttermilk, served on an immaculate table-cover, afforded more satisfaction than the most sumptuous repast at the "Great-house."⁷

At the age of eight or nine Ryland Randolph was sent to Tuscaloosa to the home of another uncle, where he lived with his paternal grandmother and aunt, and there was sent to school. At the outbreak of the Mexican War in 1846, Randolph's father, now a captain, served as a volunteer aboard the U.S. ship *Vixen* under the command of Captain Josiah Tattnall and was at the capture of Vera Cruz. In 1847 he was ordered to the Pensacola, Florida, navy yard as second in command, and Ryland Randolph soon joined him there. The boy attended

⁷ *Ibid.*, May 14, 1900.

school at the navy hospital until his teacher died in a yellow fever epidemic.⁸

In 1849 Captain Randolph took command of the U.S. ship *Albany*. Under orders he broke up the famous Round Island expedition that was organizing to invade Cuba. From Havana the *Albany* proceeded to Brazil in 1850 with young Ryland aboard. They sailed up the Amazon River some sixty miles to the city of Para, where they remained two or three weeks. Just before they left, yellow fever broke out, and Ryland Randolph became the second case on board. Two officers and several men died on the way down the river, but once out to sea the disease ceased to spread. On the voyage home the ship visited Martinique, Barbados, and other islands in the West Indies. One of young Ryland's most interesting experiences on this trip occurred in Haiti.

Whilst in Port au Prince I called with my father at the Palace of the then Emperor, or Solugue, Faustin II. He was a large, black, thick-lipped negro, having a bald head and dressed in a blue uniform. He had a mulatto interpreter, as he spoke in French. I saw some 20 or 30 children of all sizes, the youngest being entirely nude, and the others, male and female, having only shirts reaching to their knees. One Sunday the solugue mounted on a black charger reviewed his troops, consisting of 5,000 men, all negroes. The uniforms and mountings of the officers were amazing in the extreme. Mostly, the former consisted of old cast-off uniforms of other countries, apparently ancient enough to belong to revolutionary times. The latter were mostly donkeys, the splay feet of riders nearly reaching the ground. The emperor's staff was rather better mounted, but no better clothed. Whilst standing on a sidewalk watching the Emperor gallop by, his hat off and his bald head shining in the sun, a mob of negroes near me rushed at me jabbering in French, gesticulating wildly and jerked my hat off. I discovered that this rather violent demonstration was caused by my failure to doff my hat and salute his majesty. The court-officials had some ludicrous

⁸ *Ibid.*, May 15, 1900, March 19, 1903.

titles, such as the Lord of Lemonade, Duke of Marmalade, &c. &c. At a ball I attended one night, I was horrified to see some of our ship's lieutenants actually dancing round dances with some of the negresses, who flourished in the titles of countesses, dutchesses [*sic*] &c. &c. and a big buck negro officer waltzed with a daughter of the American consul, who proved to be a Yankee.⁹

Eventually, the *Albany* returned to Havana, where it was joined by the *Germantown*, a man-of-war under the command of Captain Lowndes. As Captain Randolph was ranking officer, he took command of both vessels. At that point events occurred which almost led to war with Spain.

Capt. Randolph, hearing that a couple of American merchantmen (a barque and brig) had just been captured by two Spanish war vessels and were being escorted to Havana, called on the Captain-General to try to induce him to release the captured vessels, as they had been taken many miles from the Cuban coast. Failing to move that official by argument, Capt. R. informed him that he would sail out of the harbor and take the vessels by force. The Captain-General told him that that meant war. Capt. R. replied: "Then let it be war." He immediately returned to his vessel that was anchored in the harbor, and signalled the "*Germantown*" to follow him out to sea. We (I was on board) soon sailed under the frowning guns of Morro. After beating about near the coast for an hour or two, the lookout reported four vessels coming in sight, two Spanish men-of-war followed by the two captured American merchantmen. The decks of the "*Albany*" and "*Germantown*" were cleared for action, guns shotted and all hands beat to quarters. Meantime the shore near Havana was lined with a vast assembly of people—probably 15,000 or more who had got an inkling of the probability of a fight, and were there to see it. Our vessels bore down upon the Spanish ships, the men at the big guns eager for a battle. Just before we got within range, a most unfortunate event happened. Coming at full speed was the U.S. Steamer

⁹ *Ibid.*, March, 1903.

"Saranac," commanded by Commodore Tattnall, who signalled us to heave-to. As he ranked my father, the latter had no option in the matter. Commodore T. informed us that he had steamed in all haste from Washington with orders to avoid any collision with the Spanish authorities. (It seems that our government had an idea that such was threatened.) This was sad news for the "Albany's" crew, which was eager for the fray; and soon we had the mortification of beholding the Spanish ships and their unlawful prizes sailing by us for the harbor of Havana. I never saw a madder set of men than those who reluctantly left their guns, and my father was terribly disappointed. Had the "Saranac" been just one hour later in arriving on the scene, those American vessels would have been retaken at any cost, and in the year 1850 war with Spain would have resulted.

Whilst we had two sloops-of-war of 22 guns each, the Spaniards had one frigate and a brig—thus the forces were about equal; but there were no fears on our side as to the result. In subsequent years my father often spoke of this, what he regarded as the greatest misfortune that could have befallen him; for, had he been let alone he would have rescued those Americans and perhaps have sunk their lawless captors. This would have made of him a hero in the eyes of his countrymen, who were tired of the outrages perpetrated by Spain, and would have welcomed war. And his best friend, Commo. Tattnall, was the innocent instrument, in the hands of a timid administration, who wrought this mischief to his ambitious hopes!¹⁰

After these events the *Albany* proceeded to Pensacola, where young Ryland left the ship and returned to Alabama to school.

In 1851-2 I went to school, first at Pleasant Ridge, near which my oldest brother had a plantation, and afterwards to the Greene Springs School. Subsequently, I entered Archibald's school at Eutaw, and later I went to Pike

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, May 15, 1900.

Power's high school near Staunton, Va. and later still to the High School at Alexandria, Va. That was my misfortune—I went to too many different schools for my own good. In 1853 my father was again ordered as second officer in command of the Pensacola Navy Yard, Commodore Josiah Tattnall being chief in command. As soon as I reached there I attended school, but had not been in it a month, when Commodore Tattnall tendered to me a clerkship in his office paying \$80.00 per month. This, of course, I could not resist. In the latter part of the Summer of 1853, the yellow fever broke out with great virulence, a large number of officers and their families dying. Large numbers ran away, and there were hardly enough well persons left to bury the dead. My father and myself, having already had the dread disease, escaped. He acted as chaplain often in burying the dead.¹¹

It was then that a great sorrow pervaded the survivors, caused by the report that the universally beloved Commo. Tattnall had died at his residence of the prevailing fever. I called, expecting to see him a corpse; but whilst I found his family in tears was glad to find him still alive, though struggling between life and death. That night a change came over his case for the better, and he actually recovered and enjoyed a perusal of many obituary notices of his sad demise.¹²

Randolph attended the University of Alabama in the late 1850's and then settled to planting near Eutaw and subsequently near Forkland in Greene County, Alabama, where he had some forty or fifty slaves. In 1858 he sold out and bought a plantation six miles from Montgomery, and his father also bought a home in the southern area of that city.¹³

In the years just before the Civil War talk of secession excited Montgomery, especially since William Lowndes Yancey, secession's ardent advocate resided nearby. Randolph witnessed a street fight between Yancey's son, Benjamin C., and J. J. Seibels,

¹¹ *Ibid.*, March 19, 1903. See also May 15, 1900.

¹² *Ibid.*, May 15, 1900.

¹³ *Ibid.*, March 19, 1903.

editor of the *Montgomery Confederation*. Randolph described this fight which developed over political matters and also added his recollections about William L. Yancey.

I was seated on the veranda of the Exchange Hotel when I saw Ben and Seibels meet at the mouth of Court St. He rushed upon him, and the latter warded off the blow with his closed umbrella. It looked to me like a pigmy attacking a giant, for Ben was a small and delicate-looking man, while Seibels was of Giant frame. Banks, his partner in editing "The Cooperator" newspaper [Confederation] was with him, and a large crowd gathered and separated them immediately. Ben assailed Seibels because of an editorial in "The Cooperator," [Confederation] highly offensive to his father, between whom and Seibels bad blood had long existed. The trial of Ben was to come off in a magistrate's court, his father to defend him; but Seibels very magnanimously failed to appear against him, he being little more than a boy I heard him [Yancey] in the Opera House deliver that memorable speech on his return from his brief campaign in some of the far Eastern States, when he gave such a dark picture of the politics of those South-hating states. Of course it was the grandest oration that I ever listened to, and the crowded house almost went wild with enthusiasm; both men and women often rising to their feet and cheering. Most of the throng kept their seats some little time after he had concluded, as though waiting for more. I also heard Bob Toombs' famous speech in the same house, but, though a great effort, did not, to my mind, compare with Yancey's.¹⁴

The coming of the Civil War brought upheaval to the Randolph family as to the rest of the South.

Though born and bred in Virginia, my father was a citizen of Alabama, and on the very day that the latter state seceded from the Union, he sent up his resignation. At this time he enjoyed the highest rank in the U.S. Navy, that of Commodore. He was an ardent secessionist, and

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, March 21, 1903.

blamed those Southern Officers, who commanding vessels, sailed them into Northern ports instead of Southern. He often said that had he been in command of a squadron at that time, he would, if possible, deliver the entire aggregate [sic] of war vessels to the Confederate authorities. He very much blamed his classmate, Admirer [sic] Buchanan for his vacillation early in the war; and it was this: Buchanan claimed Maryland as the state to which he owed allegiance. At the time that the states began to secede, he was in command of the Washington Navy Yard. When Virginia withdrew, he sent in his resignation, thinking that Maryland would follow suit. But, as its well known, she failed to do so. Thereupon he begged to be reinstated in the U.S. Navy, and his request was scornfully refused. So, [he] had nothing left him but to join the South, and subsequently distinguished himself as commander of the ram "Virginia," improperly called by the Yankees "Merri-mac." With the first troops that left Montgomery for the Pensacola Navy Yard, Commo. R. was among them, and aided in the peaceful capture of that place. Then the governor of Florida gave him the appointment of Commandant pro tem of the yard, in which capacity he served several months. Unfortunately, Confederate Secretary of Navy [Stephen] Mallory was his remorseless enemy; and soon after the formation of the Confederacy he deprived him of his command. All during the war my father was given unimportant commands, and no opportunity was given him to distinguish himself; this in face of the fact that he was the very *first* officer of his rank to resign from the old Navy and to offer his services to the new; and, too, he had often proved himself to be one of the most gallant and efficient officers of the old regime. For sometime [sic] he was kept in command of batteries on York river, Va., and later owing to great pressure brought to bear upon the powers that be by his influential friends, he was put in command of the almost worthless "mosquito fleet" at Mobile

At the breaking out of the war he was living in the City of Montgomery, and owned a large number of negroes and a splendid plantation 6 miles from town. These he had

accumulated from savings of his salary for many years. Unhappily he sold his land for Confederate bonds, such was his faith in the "lost cause", and, of course, his negroes went the way of others.¹⁵

Toward the end of the war Randolph's father swapped some Texas land for a farm two miles west of Wetumpka not far from the home of former Governor Benjamin Fitzpatrick. Commodore Randolph died at the home of his son Brett Randolph near Blount Springs, Alabama, in 1876 at the age of eighty.¹⁶

Ryland Randolph also joined the war effort.

At the beginning of the war I was a member of the Montgomery Mounted Rifles, under Capt. Jas. H. Clanton, with W. W. Allen 1st lieutenant, and went with that company to West Florida. Subsequently, Capt. B. T. Tarver raised a Company of the 7th Ala. Cavalry, making me orderly Sergeant, and at first stationed at Pollard and then at or near Mobile. I was finally promoted to a first lieutenancy in Company "E" of that regiment, and joined my command at Camp "Withers," about 20 miles from Fort Morgan. Whilst stationed near Mobile I was ordered to take two companies of the 7th regiment & proceed by steamboat up the Bigbee River and press into service the several hundred negroes employed at the Saltworks in Clark Co. and bring them to Mobile to work on the fortifications. This work had to be performed at the Saltworks at night, and was done under many difficulties. I succeeded in capturing some five or six hundred of those negroes and landed them in Mobile. This service required about ten days to accomplish. Not far from the works was the residence of the noted Indian-canoe-fighter, Jere. Austill; and I had the pleasure of frequently meeting him at his own hospitable house over which a single daughter presided. He was certainly a man of striking appearance, over 6 ft. high and straight even then as an arrow though a very old man. After all, this work of impressing the negroes was danger-

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, May 15, 1900.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

ous, for their white owners & employers at the Saltworks were bitter against me; not mindful of the fact that I was only obeying orders. My life was often threatened; and I never went about in the neighborhood without having a body-guard to protect me against assassination. Besides impressing the negroes my orders were to force all absentees from the army back to the front and enlist those who were at home dodging service. On my return to Mobile I made my report which was sent to Gen. Jno. H. Forney, then in command; and he complimented me very highly for having performed my irksome and hazardous duty satisfactorily.¹⁷

One of Ryland Randolph's most exciting war experiences occurred in the closing days of the war in December, 1864, when the Confederate army made a desperate attack upon the Federal army entrenched at Nashville, Tennessee, under the leadership of General George H. Thomas. Ryland Randolph described this adventure as "My trip back of Nashville."

In December, 1864, I was 1st lieut. comm'g Co. "E," 7th Ala. Cavalry, [Colonel Edmund W.] Rucker's brigade, under [General N. B.] Forrest, and stationed on the south bank of the Cumberland river, about 3 miles west of Nashville. Two days before the battle in front of that city, [December 15-16, 1864] Gen. Forrest called upon [Acting Brigadier] Gen. Rucker to furnish from his brigade a commissioned officer and 20 men for dangerous service; and Gen. R., in turn, ordered the comm'g officer of the 7th to supply the officer and men from that regiment. I was honored for the special "dangerous" service. Being allowed the privilege of choosing my men, I did so from over a hundred who volunteered to accompany me. My orders were to proceed afoot across the Cumberland river late in the afternoon, carrying with us all our cavalry equipment, besides a lot of axes and rations for 3 days. The first night out we were to mount ourselves as best we could, proceed in [the] rear of Nashville, and destroy railroads and telegraph lines leading into the city, with [the] purpose to cut

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, March 19, 1903.

off fresh arrivals of federal troops and prevent communications by wire. It was nearly daylight before we succeeded in securing the 20 horses needed, and we were about 15 miles from our camp. Though I had started with 20 men, I now had only 19. One of the men I had selected was a noted bully named Simmons, over 6 feet tall and overbearing in disposition. Not long after crossing the river, (which was done in a couple of skiffs) this fellow began to "show the white feather" by complaining of having a severe case of "cramp colic;" a favorite complaint of fellows who wanted to keep out of fights, for the reason that the surgeons could not diagnose their complaint and had to take their word for it. So, I let the fellow return to camp in one of the skiffs, as we wanted no coward along. Up to that time, all the men of his company stood in mortal dread of Simmons, but after that occasion none were so "poor as to do him reverence;" and he became "the butt" of the regiment. As we were in a thick settlement of "Union men," we did not venture to proceed by day, so we were constrained to seek a secluded spot and camp until night. We found it necessary to capture several of the farmers who had pursued us in search for their horses that we had pressed into service, and kept them "in durance vile" till night when I ordered them away. We found remaining so quiet for a whole day extremely irksome, and were pleased when darkness admonished us that it was time to proceed to the fulfillment of our hazardous mission. Fortunately, the night was dark, and those whom we met mistook us for a squad of Yankee cavalry. About midnight we arrived at the crossing of a railroad and commenced our work. We then followed the railroad till we reached a trestle, which I concluded was best to fire; so I made my men pile a quantity of brush at one end. Everything being wet, we found great difficulty in starting a blaze, and as daylight came we left and made another camp. Soon, the sound of loud cannonading in [the] direction of Nashville reached our ears, and gradually it became more distant and less distinct. This convinced me that a battle was going on & that our side was being pursued. Finally, the sound died away; and then we knew that our army had retreated out of hearing. Such being the case, there was no farther [sic] need of our service on our side

of the river; so, with heavy hearts, we began our retreat to the Cumberland river, and followed its banks down stream till we found a flat-boat crossing. There was a little hut on the opposite shore, and as the flat-boat, unfortunately, was on that side, we loudly halloosed for the boatman. Meantime, I sent a couple of men in search of some boat or skiff, as no answer came. In the course of a $\frac{1}{2}$ hour we were overjoyed to see the two men paddling to us in a skiff which was about half filled with water. This we baled [sic] out with our hats, and then I sent four men across the river to force the ferry man, if there, to bring his boat over. This fellow they found asleep, or perhaps pretendedly asleep in the hut; and after much threatening forced him to bring his flat-boat over. I was convinced by his manner that he was a Union sympathizer. We were glad to get on the South side of the Cumberland, and lost no time in pursuing our route to the Tennessee river. Fortunately for our safety, the Yankee pursuit of our disorganized army was so precipitate that we came across no blue-coated stragglers; otherwise, our capture would have been easy. Though most of us were fairly mounted, yet so rapid was our retreat and so bad the roads, that some of the horses gave out, and their riders had to double on those more fortunate. To avoid running into the rear guards of the Yankees, we were compelled to make numerous detours, and avoided the pikes. The weather was extremely cold—freezing; and most of us were barefooted and clothed in rags. Besides, our rations were exhausted, and I had to permit the men to scatter and secure food and forage at farmhouses along the route. On Christmas eve we reached the Northern bank of the Tennessee river; and, strange to say, not a man was missing; and we camped for the night in an old field on the river's banks. We escaped freezing by building and firing an immense log-heap, though it was impossible to sleep. Luckily, a "rebel" sympathizer lived close by, and when he visited us and saw our plight he got his wife and daughters to prepare for us a bountiful hot-repast—enough to feed the whole squad, I regret that I forget his name. Next morning came as a great relief after such a night of discontent. It seemed to me that it was the coldest Christmas-day I ever experienced, though our scant apparel [sic]

may have added to this thought. Anyhow, the ice was very thick. The Tennessee river was spreading itself. How to cross the swollen waters of the now mighty river, was, to us, the absorbing question. The river was far out of its banks, with a fearfully swift current. After a long search for means of transportation, the only means we could find hidden among the overhanging willows was a small skiff, capable of holding only two or three men at a time. Our method of crossing was as follows: three men at a time would take passage, one to paddle and the other two to lead two horses, one on each side of [the] skiff. Several hours were thus disagreeably spent. I had "captured" across the Cumberland a very fine-blooded, high-spirited mare; and fearing that she might give some trouble, I did not cross with her until the last. I held her by a short halter, and had not proceeded a dozen yards, she swimming alongside the skiff, when she began pawing at a great rate, raising her fore-feet high in [the] air, and finally landed them in the skiff and completely turned the sorry craft over, bottom upwards. Here was a terrible dilemma. I had to let go the mare in order to clutch the bottom of the skiff to save my life. She turned and swam back to shore. Luckily, the branches of overhanging willow-trees hung within reach, and we were saved from drowning by clutching these, mounting the bottom of [the] boat and hand over hand, pulling ourselves back to shore. Had the accident occurred a few yards farther where the current was swift and there were no trees, down stream all of us would have gone, and drowning our fate. By the aid of our companions ashore, who held out to us long poles that we clutched and pulled us to land, we were saved; but so bitter cold was it, that in a few moments our ragged clothes had frozen on us as stiff as boards and we could hardly walk to the fire a few steps away. It took us a long while to dry, and our sufferings were intense. Meantime, the men got the skiff ashore and bailed it out, and, two or three men & horses at a time, all had gotten across save us who were being thawed and our horses. Nothing was left for me to do but to make another attempt, which I did. My restless mare tried the same game as before, but experience had made me more cautious, and I kept her far enough away

to avoid her rearings. It was near night when we all had gotten over, shivering from cold and hungry as wolves. I sent out 3 of my men to seek food for both men and horses, whilst we set fire to a small hut for warmth. After what seemed an age, the foragers returned, loaded down with biscuit corn-dodgers and a side of bacon besides a borrowed bucket of coffee, which we heated over. I thought it was the most toothsome meal that I had ever sat before. So wearied were we by reason of the day's performances that, despite the cold, we did not stir next morning till long after sun-up. Nothing farther of importance occurred, except that in crossing the Harpeth river bridge we came across 3 or 4 straggling Yankee soldiers who had loitered behind their pursuing army. These were reclining, with their knapsacks as pillows, and, apparently, did not notice us as we rode by, and we had not time or inclination to notice them. Probably they were half-asleep and thought we were some of their own cavalry loitering in [the] rear. Several days passed ere we succeeded in rejoining our command. I believe it was at or near Iuka [Mississippi]. When we rode into camp and found our command, we were regarded by our comrades with apparent astonishment. Had we been ghosts of former selves, they could not have regarded us with greater wonder. They believed that the entire party had been captured, and I was complimented highly for my services, especially for bringing back every one of my men in safety. When we reached, in our headlong retreat, Verona, Miss., I was both hatless and shoeless, and a lady, whose husband was absent in the army, took sufficient compassion upon me to furnish me with one of his old hats and pair of shoes—the latter about 3 Nos. too large, and which I stuffed with rags. Here it was, for the first time, that my body become inhabited by what we termed "gray-backs", and the fact rendered me desperate, notwithstanding nearly every body else had them. In the beginning of the war I belonged to Clanton's Mounted Rifles; and I remember that when we discovered that one man of the company was infested by those horrible insect pests, we talked, seriously, of drumming him out of camp; and so hard were we upon him that he actually got transferred. What was then an

exception had now become a rule. I felt so humiliated at my plight that I determined to call upon Gen. Forrest and demand a furlough so I could go home and procure a new outfit of clothing. Accordingly, one morning I went to his headquarters and requested his orderly to give me admittance. This clean-looking fellow looked me over pretty closely, and finally went into the general's room. Presently, he returned and told me to go in. Instead of returning my salutation, Gen. F. and his half-dozen aids [sic] & clerks stared at me, and this made me mad. I proceeded to inform him who I was, not forgetting a narration of my experience across the Cumberland. He, as I thought rather abruptly, told me he was giving no furloughs, as every man was now needed at the front. I replied that in my then plight I was a disgrace both to my commission and the army, and could be of no farther service unless he granted me a ten day's furlough so as to replenish my wardrobe. I felt desperate and did not hesitate to speak very plainly to him. Finally, after looking me all over, he directed his Adjutant Gen'l to fix me up a furlough, and next day I started for home in Montgomery. Meantime, our cavalry command kept on retreating till it reached Montevallo, in Shelby Co. Ala. where I rejoined it. Here we were reviewed by Gen. Abe Buford, and where I first saw that hardened old sinner. He reminded me of a great hippopotamus on horseback, riding up and down the lines and occasionally damning something or somebody that didn't please him. Soon after this little rest at Montevallo, [General James H.] Wilson's famous raid came tearing through the State, chasing our regiment through Selma, Benton, Montgomery and other towns. A few miles out of Montgomery, whilst we were being hotly pursued, Wilson's vanguard firing into our rearguard as we fled, my horse stumbled and rolled over me in a ditch. Fortunately, I was concealed by osage orange hedges growing on each side, though I could distinctly see the rushing Yankee cavalry, and had the mortification of beholding them capture my horse just as he arose from the ditch. They were not a dozen steps from me, and I always wondered how I escaped capture. After all had passed, I footed it to my father's farm two miles from

Wetumpka. My next move was to Gainesville, Ala. where our regiment surrendered.¹⁸

After the war closed Randolph resided briefly in Greene County, Alabama, before moving in late 1867 to Tuskaloosa, where he commenced publication of the Tuskaloosa *Independent Monitor*, a staunchly conservative Democratic newspaper. His life as a Tuscakoolsa editor during reconstruction was a lively one.

In October, 1867, I bought out the *Independent Monitor* newspaper and removed to Tuskaloosa. I had had no experience in newspaper-publishing except that during my sojourn of a year in Eutaw, Ala. I had occasionally mounted the editorial tripod of the *Whig & Observer* through friendship for its editor, W. O. Monroe. Whilst I had a few old acquaintances in Tuskaloosa, still my knowledge of the people was quite limited. I made myself familiar with local affairs and the citizens. My first printer was old Dennis Dykous, formerly of the *Marion Commonwealth*. I began publishing my paper with fear and trembling, but determined to go ahead, please or displease. I found the majority of the people at first wavering between democracy and reconstruction. Many leading citizens were "on the fence," as it was called and were undecided as to what was the best course to take in politics. Some went so far as to advise me to go "more slowly,[""] but I went all the faster. After a few issues of the paper, I detected a change for the better, and congratulations began to come in. About this time Ku Klux Klans began to be organized throughout the State, and Tuskaloosa "joined the procession," as it were. The leading negroes of the place had become quite insolent in their demeanor to white-folks, and, to their shame be it said, the latter had grown timid and actually afraid of the former. For a wonder, months passed ere I had any trouble with the negroes, though other white men had, and one Friday in March [27, 1868] an impudent yellow rascal actually struck a white man in one of the stores without the latter resenting the blow. This, of

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, May 21, 1900.

course, emboldened his black fellows. Next day (Saturday) [March 28, 1868] was auction-day, and a large crowd of whites and blacks was in town. About 11 o'clock A.M. I was seated in my office writing when I heard a great commotion on the opposite side of the street. I hurriedly pocketed a derringer and dirk-knife and rushed down stairs. Rhay's auction was going on diagonally across the street, and I could see two burly negro men standing over a diminutive white man beating him for all they were worth; one having a regular bludgeon in shape of a stick, belaboring the recumbent form. Both races were standing by. Not a white arm was raised either to protect the white man or separate the unequal combatants. I immediately started across the street, such was the "mix-up" that I dared not aim my pistol at the negroes lest I might shoot the white man; so I raised the weapon high above their heads & fired, hoping to engage the negroes' attention as I feared they might kill him ere I could reach them. It had the desired effect; for whilst one negro left at double-quick, the one with the big stick left Hollingsworth, (the man he was beating) and rushed upon me. My knife was a long spring-bladed one, readily opened with one hand. I caught his falling stick on my left arm, whilst with my right I stabbed him till he fell, unconscious. Meantime, Hollingsworth recovered sufficiently to rush up with a huge flagstone in both hands and began pummelling the back of Balus Eddins' (the negro) head, who lay motionless on his stomach. I caught H's hand & stopped him, telling him that the negro was stone dead, and there was no use *stoning* him any more.¹⁰ I then wiped my knife, trickling with blood, on my shoe, and then discovered that about half an inch of the point was broken off. Subsequently it was traced to the back-bone of the negro, and was there still some five years ago when I met him limping on the streets of Tuskalooosa. Seeing a large crowd of negroes congregating at what was known then as "Spillar's Corner" (probably over 100) with threatening motions, and some actually with old muskets, I proceeded upstairs over [John]

¹⁰ Randolph was mistaken in his statement that Balus Eddins was dead. He lived to testify in Randolph's trial in Selma a month later.

Glascocock's store to my office, and prepared myself for action by examining my double-barrel shot-gun and a repeater from my armory. Whilst thus engaged, some half-dozen of my friends, having my safety at heart, rushed up to my office and excitedly begged me to leave town the back-way, where a country-friend had a horse hitched at my service. They went on to say that the negroes were threatening to kill me and to burn the town, and were then organizing ready to assail and kill me. I thanked them for their well-meant advice, but informed them that did I do as they bid, all the good I had just done would be canceled, and the negroes would be worse than ever, and I could never return; that I was determined to settle the matter of race supremacy right there and then; and whilst they were still arguing and urging me to flee, I left the room, thoroughly armed with gun, pistols and a bowie-knife that I had kept for emergencies. I went down stairs and beheld, not a hundred yards away, between one & two hundred jabbering negroes, evidently making ready to march and charge. I raised my gun as if to fire and, alone, started toward the crowd. The way that crowd of darkies scattered and scampered away, was "a caution," as the saying is; indeed, so great was the "skeedaddle" that even I could not resist the temptation of laughing; and, to make the fun more complete, I sighted my gun at the fleeing mob. Then there was not only running but actual "hollering"; and in less than five minutes not a negro was to be seen on the streets. A farmer who, soon afterwards, came in from Taylorsville, reported that he met a big gang of negroes double-quicking it home, but in such haste that he could not gather from them the cause of their flight. This event made of me a hero, for the time being; and the very ones who had fearfully begged me to flee, now saw their mistake, and thanked me for remaining and "winning the bluff," as I termed it. After this affair I had no more serious trouble with negroes. I slept in my room all those years alone, no one else in the building at night, my door not even locked, and, in hot Summer nights, I made my pallet down on the gallery. On Sunday morning, on my way to breakfast at the "Mansion House", following the foregoing Saturday, I saw at Garner's Corner on [the] opposite of

[the] street, 3 or 4 negroes, and near by Wm. Comeggs, a policeman. I heard one of these impudent-looking negroes call out my name, but could not distinguish what was said. I immediately drew & cocked my repeater and started towards them; but before I got within sure pistol-shot, they vamoosed out of sight down an alley. True, I received sundry anonymous missives, evidently penned by negroes, threatening my life in various ways, but I never paid any attention to them. The negroes actually thought that I bore a charmed life. It was for this affair that I was arrested & imprisoned in Montgomery and Selma, and tried by court-martial in the latter place [April 29-May 2, 1868]

. . . . The Selma *Times*, then edited by Bob McKee, contained a full report of the trial, taken down in short-hand by said McK. and this was copied in the "Monitor", making a full page. Besides, the "Monitor" of those dates contained sundry letters from me written in prison and headed: "A Voice from the Despot's Dungeon." My paper also gave an account of my return to T. after my release; telling how the people of both sexes and all ages turned out to meet and greet me; the ladies marching behind my carriage in the middle of the streets and burying me under an avalanche of flowers. All these events are told in "The Monitor," of that day. I was as great a hero locally as Hobson was nationally.²⁰

When I first went to T. there was a newspaper published there called *The Reconstructionist*, edited by H. S. Whitfield. I challenged him to fight a duel in Mississippi. He declining, I published him [October 30, 1867]. In response, he invited me through the columns of his paper to meet him at his friend's (Dr. Cochrane's) office, to street-fight it out. Of course, I paid no attention to this too much like the invitation of the spider to the fly; but got so excited and made such a "racket," that the authorities actually feared that there would be a battle; so both of us were arrested and placed each under a \$2,500 bond to keep the peace. Soon after this, Whitfield got elected professor of mathematics at the University—and his place on the "Re-

²⁰ Richmond P. Hobson of Greensboro, Alabama, became a national hero after the naval battle of Santiago in the Spanish-American War.

constructionist's" tripod was filled by my former printer, Dennis Dykous. During one of my absences from town this old reprobate had an article in his paper very offensive to those many ladies who had turned out to meet me on my return from prison, and he also called me "the petticoat hero." It so happened that I returned to town on the afternoon of the very day of his publication, and was shown the article by some one who himself should have resented it. As soon as I read it, I became "piping hot," and started for his office. As it happened, I met him on the way and slapped soundly his jaws. He He [sic] raised his stick as if to resent it, when I pulled out my pistol; then he incontinently "turned tail" and rapidly got out of the way. This little fracas cost me dear, old [D.] Woodruff, the radical mayor, fining me \$20.00. It was the business of old [Henry] McGown, the radical marshal, to serve the papers on me; but not daring to approach me, he got a friendly democrat to intercede in his behalf and to act in his place; to which arrangement I consented. During this time, several parties were given to me by lady-friends. A big pic-nic was given near "Foster's Settlement," one of my strongholds, at which there were over 200 people, having attended from Tuskaloosa and several neighboring villages and hamlets. During all this while and for several subsequent months, a company of Federal soldiers, under command of a lieutenant, was quartered in town for the protection of negroes and scalawags; and these were terribly outraged as they went by private houses by reason of the children bawling out: "Hurrah for Randolph!" all [of] which excited their bitterness against me. It was about this time that orders came from Gen. Oliver Shepherd, comm'g dep't at Montgomery, to suppress the *Monitor* and arrest me [June 23, 1868]. Fortunately, I learned of the plan, and not wishing to get another dose of imprisonment in a "Despot's Dungeon," I accepted an invitation from friends in Foster's Settlement, and drove there, to remain till quiet was restored. A Yankee guard was placed on the veranda fronting my office, the doors locked, and admittance refused. (I enclose a photo. of the suppression, taken by Vogle, Tuskaloosa's artist.) Mine was the only paper in the State thus served. The suppression lasted

only about ten days [July 4-July 14, 1868]. The interim was supplied by "The Phoenix," a little 10 x 12 sheet edited for one week by D. D. Fiquet, a young lawyer of T. The state press was so hot in its denunciation of such tyranny that Shepherd found it convenient to relent by having the soldier removed and word sent to me that I might return without molestation. It was Loomis, not "Old Dicks" who called for "them molasses."²¹ I had two opponents who ran against me for the legislature; the negro and old Judge Moses McGuire, formerly probate judge of the county and a very popular man among the "hillites," as he was a "soaptail," i.e. nothing in politics. A good many believed and hoped that I would be beaten, but the table of the election returns shows how mistaken these were. In the "Monitor" of November, 1869 [December 21, 1869] you will find published an apologetic speech of mine before the legislature, beside sundry letters written from Montgomery by me. It was one of these that led to my being turned out on occasion of my going home to be married [February 2, 1870]. A month after this latter event, occurred the dreadful affair that resulted in the loss of my leg. This was as follows:

During the latter part of March, 1870, the *Ala. State Journal* contained a very bitter and abusive comm'n signed by Vernon Henry Vaughan. About the same time a circus performed in Tuscaloosa, which I attended, hoping to meet Vaughan, as I heard that he was in town. On the 31st of March I collected from the circus \$25.00 for advertising, in 25¢ and 50¢ fractional currency, which was in circulation in those days. I put this in an old-style pocket-book, making a wad several inches thick. I carried this home and presented it to my wife, who put it in a bureau-drawer. The next morning, to tease her, I abstracted the pocket-book and placed it in my left inside vest-pocket, and took it thus down town. I met several friends who informed me that

²¹ J. C. Loomis was an English professor at the University of Alabama during Reconstruction years, and "Old Dicks" was J. DeForest Richards, president of the University of Alabama in 1869. The details of this episode are recounted in a letter to DuBose on March 10, 1903.

Vaughan and two other men from the University had come to town in a wagon with guns. I knew Vaughan to be too big a coward to attack me openly; however, I had my pistol and borrowed a bowie-knife. I was talking to an acquaintance at Foster's corner, when a rather rough-looking stranger came along and brushed against me so rudely as to push me out of my tracks. In return I struck him in the face, when he immediately drew a repeater and fired. He was not more than an arm's length off; and I felt something hit me in my left side so strong as to almost knock me down, and the shock so great that for some little time I could not recover myself. Meantime, the attacking fellow, seeing that he had not killed me, backed away and at some little distance fired again. This shot, I think, went through the head of old man Wm. Bird, who stood some feet behind me. Recovering myself, I also began firing, one of my shots through the fellow's hat and another striking his belt-buckle, causing him to double-up, as it were. After exhausting his 5 shots he turned and ran, and after getting away about a dozen steps, he turned and faced me with a fresh-repeater. I drew my knife and rushed at him, and the sight of the big blade so demoralized him that he missed me as he fired, and just before I reached him he turned tail and ran into the front door of [C.M.] Foster's store, I pursuing him. Just as I was entering the door, he fired another shot as he ran, over his shoulder, and that was the shot that struck me just above the knee, going upwards and severing my femoral artery. I fell, unconscious, and was taken into a room where Dr. [James] Guild attended me. Meantime Smith²² (my assailant) kept on running till he reached the University, where he was arrested. He did not know that he had shot me, and could not understand why his first shot had not gone through my heart. The reason was, that the ball penetrated that big wad of paper currency, and when I was undressed the ball was found in my clothing. This, and the fact that he had two repeaters, proved that he deliberately intended to assassinate

²² The assailant was Cadet William Smith of the University, son of a member of the board of regents. *Demopolis Southern Republican*, April 6, 1870.

ate me in the interests of his friend Vaughan, who kept in the background.²³

This episode resulted in the amputation of Randolph's leg, after which he walked with a crutch and a cane.²⁴ However, such physical misfortunes did not restrict Randolph's proclivity for violence.

In 1868 or 9 I came near having two duels on my hands. First, G. Garnett Andrews (subsequently Mayor of Chattanooga) a brother editor & democrat, came all the way from Yazoo City, Miss., to challenge me. On his way through Columbus, Battle Fort, Editor of *The Index*, offered his services as second. When they reached Tuscaloosa, mutual friends settled the matter satisfactorily to both parties, as files of *The Monitor* will show. When John M. Martin, son-in-law of Judge E. W. Peck, espousing the cause of the latter, invited me out of the State, and ourselves and seconds went all the way to Memphis, intending to fight on the Arkansas side of the river. Late on the night preceeding [sic] the proposed duel a party of Memphis gentlemen went up to my bed room, I having retired some hours before. They were Gen. Chalmers, Cols. L. J. Dupre, Matt. C. Galloway, Lide & Sam M. Meek. Their object was to amicably settle the difficulty, which they did, as *The Monitor* will show. They decided that there was no cause for a duel, and, therefore, it was a victory for me!²⁵

In 1872 Randolph had an altercation with Joseph W. Taylor, who had purchased the *Independent Monitor* from Randolph.

Some months afterwards, [the sale of the *Monitor*] I was besought by a number of my old subscribers to start a new paper, as *The Times* (formed from the "Monitor" & "The Observer") did not give satisfaction. I, accordingly, pre-

²³ Ryland Randolph to J. W. DuBose, May 21, 1900, DuBose Papers. See also Ryland Randolph to J. W. DuBose, March 21, 1903. Vernon H. Vaughan was subsequently acquitted of involvement in this episode. *Demopolis Southern Republican*, May 4, 1870.

²⁴ Tuscaloosa *Independent Monitor*, April 19, 1870.

²⁵ Ryland Randolph to J. W. DuBose, May 21, 1900, DuBose Papers.

pared to start a new paper, called "The Blade." Taylor, when informed thereof, got mad, and complained thereof, saying that when I sold him "the Monitor," I agreed not to enter journalism again in Tuscaloosa. As this was utterly untrue, I came out in a statement to that effect. This misunderstanding caused bad blood between us; however, "The Blade" came & prospered some months ere matters culminated in actual strife. A certain issue of "The Times," finally, contained an article very offensive to me. It did not call my name, but was so plainly meant for me that all understood it. I determined to resent the affront, and was on the lookout for Taylor two or three days before I met him one Saturday afternoon just before dusk at a crossing on Main St. Am sorry to say, I began by using "cuss words," and used my cane over his head which, however, was much protected by a thick felt hat. Before I could repeat the blow, he rushed upon me, whilst I got his head "in chancery," as the saying is, and crutch and stick got away. Having but one leg, I could ill-balance myself; however, in the fall that followed, I fell on top, still with left arm around his neck, and with the other pummeling his face and drawing forth "the claret." I could not maintain my place on top, and soon got under, he, all the while trying to pull away and loudly called out: "Somebody pull me off, pull me off!" About this time A.C. Hargrove rushed up and pulled us apart. Whilst waiting for some one to hand me my crutch and stick, I say [sic] Taylor approaching me as I lay on the ground. It seems that his hat was just behind me, as I heard afterwards, and he was going to regain it. I, however, thought that his purpose was to attack me whilst still reclining, so I pulled out my wife's little 22 S. & W. repeater, cocked it and pointed it at him. He called out: "For God's sake, don't let him shoot!" and Hargrove grabbed the little weapon. And that ended the fight, so-called. Joseph W. Taylor was a man of strong mind & wonderful memory, but was utterly deficient in courage and common sense. He never forgave a supposed injury. He wielded a powerful pen as well as tongue. Had he possessed "pluck," he would have been a dangerous man, as he was an everlasting hater. He married a daughter of Solomon McAlpine, in Eutaw, and lived just opposite

his father-in-law. He was an utter failure as a lawyer, and so far failed to support his family, that they tell it about him in Eutaw that the McAlpine's [sic] were wont to supply him with the necessities of life across the street. He tried farming once. One of his neighbors came along and Taylor complained that his horse-mill (in use in those days, []) would not grind. It was pointed out to him that the mill was going the wrong way. On another occasion he pursued a rat into his hole and fired his gun therein to kill the rodent. The poor genius was kicked heels over head.²⁰

During Reconstruction Randolph *Independent Monitor* regularly criticized the faculty of the University of Alabama which seemed inferior when compared with its illustrious earlier members. He described graphically to DuBose some of the University affairs.

The president of the University in 1869 was J. DeForrest Richards, or "Old Dicks," as the "Monitor" dubbed him and taken up by all the small boys whenever he appeared in town. He was a carpetbagger from way down East, and was so greedy for office that he served both as president of the U. and State Senator misrepresenting the county of Lowndes, at the same time. N.B. Cloud and his gang of so-called "regents" made "old Dicks p. of U. Just before that a North Ala. carpetbagger named Harper was chosen by said "regents," but he didn't possess the brazen pluck of "O.D." I discovered his p. off. address and mailed to him an issue of the *Monitor* cont'g an editorial devoted expressly to him, and letting him know how the K.K.K.'s of T. would receive him; consequently, Harper never put in an appearance, and for sometime [sic] the U. of A. languished for a presidential creation of the "regents." Then those latter scalawag gentry, under the inspiration of "Old Nubibus," as we dubbed him, chose another carpetbagger for p. of U. by name of Northrop; but he also had heard terrible news of the doings of the K.K.K.'s of T, and, consequently, refused the tempting bait. To the best of my

²⁰ *Ibid.*

recollection there was no Dr. Collins ever a professor there. He may have been chosen, but he, like Harper and Northrop, failed to put in an appearance. But there was a professor called *Callins* who did have "the gall" to accept (I forget what chair he attempted to fill). I remember that Callins was blessed with as many immediate descendents [*sic*] as the average Methodist preacher—number 9; and the boys called the youngest of these brats, who was born at the U., Ryland Randolph Callins; in token of his daddy's inexpressible love for me. There was one other "professor" named [J.C.] Loomis, who pretended to fill the chair of English Literature or *Belles-lettres*—afterwards well-filled by late great big (mentally as well as physically) B.F. Meek. This Loomis is indelibly impressed upon my mind by two events. First, It was my custom on each hebdomadal publishing—day to send a ½ dozen copies of the "Monitor" to the University—to be distributed among the "students", who did not number any more than this. Loomis, not relishing the style in which, each week, he was held up to public contempt, met my carrier and ordered him off the campus. I addressed "the gentleman" a pretty fiery note, informing him that a repetition of the offense would result in my administering to him a d - - d good thrashing on sight. He boldly heeded not the warning; whereupon, on one Saturday, seeing him standing in the doorway of Woodruff's book-store, I procured a suitable cane, — one that would hurt but not kill — crossed over and belabored him in a style amply satisfactory to my wounded feelings as an Editor, and left him sprawling on the floor, bellowing for help. Again, on occasion of my bridal trip to Mobile on a steamboat, Loomis and wife were passengers on [the] same craft.²⁷ One morning at breakfast, they were seated opposite to us. When the buckwheat cakes were served, Loomis rather loudly asked: "Waiter, han' me those mer-

²⁷ Ryland Randolph married Katherine Clay Withers of Huntsville, February 2, 1870. Because her parents had died when she was a small child in Mississippi, Governor C. C. Clay, Sr., who had married her aunt, took charge of her. This family reared the girl, and she learned to call them "father" and "mother." While in her teens she visited her sister, Mrs. W. A. Battle in Tuscaloosa; meanwhile, Federal troops occupied Huntsville, and she never returned to her foster parents. *Ibid.*, May 14, 1900.

lasses," greatly to the amusement of the long table full of unsympathetic passengers.

You mention N.B. Chambliss, son-in-law of Gen. [William J.] Hardee and professor of mathematics. He it was who went with his friend Roy to Eutaw and challenged non-combatant Jos. W. Taylor, Editor of "The Whig & Observer" to mortal combat over in Mississippi; because of severe strictures from T's pen. The latter declined, being both religiously and regardfully of self-safety opposed to the *code duello*; but he screwed his courage up to the sticking-point of informing Chambliss that he could be found in his place of business at almost anytime; & that ended the matter. If you will refer to the columns of one of my bound-volumes of "The [Tuskaloosa] Blade," you will see that I handled C— pretty roughly—much worse than did T --; yet he never honored me with either pen or sword. He tried hard, with the help of his wife (who was a splendid woman) to live down his disgrace, but the society of T -- shut him out. Before Chambliss' time that gallant soldier, the late Gen. John H. Forney, was tendered a professorship by the "regents," and he made the mistake of accepting, and came to T. I had met him during the war, and we again met at the old Mansion House the day of his arrival. With much feeling he asked me to "deal gently" with him in "The Monitor." I promised him not to hurt his feelings because of his fine war-record; but went on to tell him that he had made a terrible mistake to accept [a] place at the U. under the then existing conditions, and urged him to consider well his proposed course before it was too late. That afternoon Gen. F. bid me good-bye, and incontinently returned to his home in Jacksonville, without even taking a look at the University. He gave me to understand that as much as he needed the place his conscience would not permit him to fill it. The only other professors, the creations of the board of regents, whom I remember, were David L. Peck, W. K. McConnell and Vernon Henry Vaughan. McC. was commandant; and being about 6 ft. 2 in. high and large in proportion, made a striking one, physically. Vaughan first landed in T. from a steamboat. He had a double-barrel gun on his shoulder, and led four emaciated pointer dogs

over the gang way. Most of his time was spent in drinking whisky and hunting quails. His wife was an elegant Montgomery woman, daughter of W.C. Bibb; and her palpable mesalliance excited the sympathy of T. society. He and I were members of the same company at [the] beginning of the war—Clanton's mounted rifles. He disgraced himself by an act of cowardice before the enemy. He was professor of English at the U. Being a republican, after his difficulty with me, he hied to Washington, D.C. and was made private secretary to the Governor of Utah (then a territory). The latter dying, Vaughn [sic] succeeded to the governorship in 1873. [He] Died of *delirium tremens* in 1878.

. . . .

At one time so high was the feeling against "Old Dicks," that some mischievous boys, one Saturday evening, visited his stable and closely clipped his horse's mane and tail, so that himself and all the rest of the "Dicks" family were prevented from attending church next day; the Presbyterian church, to which they belonged, being about 1½ miles distant. It was the cause of great merriment, to see the Rip Van Winkle-like old fellow riding horseback (his favorite method of locomotion) through the streets, the small boys vociferously yelling his nickname. In November, 1869, there was no railroad in Tuscaloosa; and to reach Montgomery one had to go by stage to Selma, via Greensboro' and Marion. At Selma he had [the] choice either to stage it or "strike" a steamboat; provided he "hit" the latter *en route* from Mobile. The day before I started for Montgomery to take my seat in the Legislature, a young lady was put in my charge as far as Marion, and I engaged the two back seats. She first got in and occupied one of the back seats. Then, as the coach passed down Main St. to call for me at my office, "Old Dicks" stopped the driver, got in and seated himself by the side of my charge. As I went down the stairway and saw the situation, I was so overcome with indignation that I could hardly contain myself. Indeed, I did not contain myself long; for upon my demanding the seat and the old reprobate's shaking his hoary head and refusing to stir, I couldn't help grabbing

him by his collar and jerking him out of the hack's door to the pavement in presence of a Yankee Lieut. and squad of soldiers, who had assembled at the place evidently anticipating something outside the usual routine. The lieutenant [*sic*] & I had some bitter exchange of words to no purpose; and he finally persuaded "Old Dicks" to sit on the front seat as there was "a lady in the case." The "president" of the U. rode thus all the way to the capital without opening his mouth, and was soon occupying his seat in the Senate Chamber, drawing pay both there and at the University, besides mileage, &c. He did not see his Lowndes Co. constituents from year's end to year's end; and it was a downright shame that this old scoundrel was allowed to hold two offices at [the] same time. His "hopeful," J. DeF. R. Jr., was at this time sheriff of Lowndes Co. by virtue of negro votes. A year or so after the downfall of radicalism, and after "Old Dicks" flew from the wrath to come by returning down east with bulging carpetbags, he was gathered to his fathers below, where is weeping & wailing &c. During his regime the faculty numbered, most of the time, as many as the students, and never were positions more sinceure.²⁸

Randolph also recollected from his Reconstruction experiences a meeting with John Wilson, a North Alabama resident whose wartime adventures at the hands of robbers had been recounted in an article by DuBose shortly before Randolph wrote this particular letter.²⁹

The late John Glascock, over 30 years ago, introduced Wilson to me in my office, giving me, beforehand, a brief account of his exploits. I well remember the occasion of that introduction. Wilson was a sad, silent man, of admirable physique. He came to Tusk. on horseback. I did my best to "pump" him regarding himself, but he sat in my office like the Sphinx. Hoping to draw him out, I sent to the Livery Stable for a horse, saddled, and when he arose to depart I invited him to ride with me over town, an invita-

²⁸ *Ibid.*, March 10, 1903.

²⁹ J. W. DuBose, "Tales of Personal Adventure," *Transactions of the Alabama Historical Society*, 1898-99, edited by T. M. Owen (Tuscaloosa, 1899), 178-183.

tion that he accepted. But I made no headway in the effort to learn from his own lips his history. I wanted to publish it in my paper. Whilst he was in the Confed. army, certain of his neighbors (union men) brutally murdered several members of his family, and he swore vengeance. When he got home he made it the business of his life to kill all those villains, (some 5 or 6 in number.) He followed two of these in the then wilds of Texas and Arkansas, spending 3 or 4 years in the hunt for blood. But he finally found his human quarry, killed them and then returned to his log-cabin in Fayette or Pickens—I forget which.

It would seem that he had failed to kill *all* of those whom he sought, for a few months after his visit to Tusk. he was called to his door one dark night and was riddled with buck-shot. I had suggested to him that such might be his fate, but he merely smiled grimly and said that he was always on his guard. So I was both surprised and shocked when I heard of his death in that manner.³⁰

After leaving Tuskaloosa during the last years of Reconstruction, Randolph moved to Birmingham. He wrote DuBose a brief statement about these years, entitling his statement "My Brief Experience in Journalism in B'ham, Ala."

I regret to have to say that I have nothing particularly to be proud of under this head. I confess that I made a great mistake in my warfare against the [Democratic] party at that time, and it was like "kicking against the pricks." True, the party was corrupt, especially manifested in its county conventions, but it was too big a giant for one little pigmy-editor to assail. I could not blame A.O. Lane, Editor of *The Iron Age*, for resenting what I wrote about him. The only complaint I had to make was the manner of his attack. He shot me in the back of the neck without notifying me. He should either have challenged me according to the Code, or he should have notified me to defend myself on sight. The "Independent" was edited by Thos. M. [A.] McLaughlin. An editorial appeared in that paper very offensive to me. He was in the habit of delivering his own

³⁰ Ryland Randolph to J. W. DuBose, April 5, 1903, DuBose Papers.

papers after publication. So, one Saturday as he came down 20th St. with a large bundle of "Independents" I assaulted him as I had done Taylor, and the side-walk became thickly strewn with papers. We clinched but were immediately parted by by-standers, and no harm done. This occurred prior to the Lane affair.³¹

Randolph continued to live in Birmingham for the remainder of his life. By 1903 the city bloomed as a prosperous center in the mineral belt.

It begins to look as though Birmingham is on the eve of another real estate boom, as, no doubt, you have discovered in the town papers. But what good will that be to poor devils who have no dirt to dispose of? It seems that there are about $\frac{1}{2}$ a doz. new railroads pointing this way—all to be completed, probably, this year. As for me, my health is so bad in this climate that I purpose making a change to Southern Florida next Fall, there to spend my few remaining days.³²

Randolph's hope to move south never materialized. Two weeks later on April 19, 1903, he suffered a painful accident.

I had gone into the [railroad] car, and was on the eve of taking a seat a few feet from the door, when the car started off with a sudden jump, causing me to lose my balance, and throwing me backwards, the back of my head striking with terrible force the iron facing in the door-way. For many moments I was totally unconscious, and had to be carried to my seat by some of the railway employees. On reaching my home-station I had not sufficiently recovered to risk getting off without help. Ever since then I have been confined within doors, at times undergoing great pain in back of my head, and aggravated by my catarrh affection.³³

Scribbled on the back of the letter giving this account was a note dated April 30, 1903, saying that Randolph was glad that he had written earlier for he felt "more surely bad today." The

³¹ *Ibid.*, May 21, 1900.

³² *Ibid.*, April 5, 1903.

³³ *Ibid.*, April 29, 1903.

injuries Randolph had sustained were obviously quite serious. A notation on this letter in DuBose's handwriting added that Randolph died a week later on May 7, 1903. Thus ended the life of one of the most exciting and controversial newspaper editors of the Reconstruction era in Alabama.

VIOLENCE: AN INSTRUMENT OF POLICY IN RECONSTRUCTION ALABAMA

By

Ray Granade

The idea of violence during Reconstruction by now conjures up a stereotyped mental picture. Invariably, the time is midnight. Scattered clouds allow the moon only brief glimpses of the earthbound scene. But the light from even this hidden source is sufficient to reveal the silent band of draped figures riding through the night. The group surrounds a tiny cabin and the muffled voice of the leader calls a Negro to the porch. Almost invisible in the shadows, the victim emerges from the deeper gloom of the door. Perhaps merely a lashing awaits him, though he may face an impromptu lynching, a load of 00 buckshot, a pistol ball, or a mutilating Bowie knife. After the deed is done, two blasts of the leader's whistle signal a general remounting of the hooded figures. Then, in a stillness broken only by horses' hoofs or possibly the sounds of agony from the mass of raw flesh which had once been a human being, the still-silent band departs.

Yet such Ku Klux Klan visitations formed only a small part of the turbulence in Reconstruction Alabama. Federal soldiers, white and black individuals, and secret Klan-like organizations of blacks and whites shared a taste for violence to which Alabama played host. Though life undeniably continued (farmers worried about poor crops, politicians about elections, and nearly everybody about the hunger and destitution brought on by the war), turmoil formed the backdrop against which the play was held.

There were many reasons for the violence. The frontier tradition and the Old South left a legacy of ferocity. Specific problems called for a solution, with force seemingly the only instrument available. Political supremacy called for power to maintain or overthrow it, giving both sides an excuse to utilize extremities. While most of the violence came from political rivalry, the most basic reason was the elemental emotion of

fear, regardless of the perpetrators. A combination of these and other factors produced lawlessness on a large scale in certain areas of Alabama. To understand the extreme conditions which permeated life in Alabama during this era, this fabric of interwoven reasons must be investigated.

Alabama was no stranger to violence when Reconstruction arrived. The state was essentially a frontier area when Ft. Sumter was fired on, despite her forty years of statehood. All the unrest associated with a newly-opened region marked the area's development. And the Civil War had done nothing to decrease the legacy of roughness willed by the frontier. There were two main evidences of this heritage—the individualism which called for immediate personal action and the general habit of carrying weapons.

Throughout Reconstruction newspapers commented on the impetuosity of Alabamians. Violent action occurred everywhere. A recent scholar noted that in the realm of politics, passion generally ran too high for objectivity.¹ A challenge at the polls was liable to launch a fight, if not a riot.² Barroom brawls and dock fights occurred as they always had, especially in Mobile, Tuscaloosa, Montgomery, and other river ports. But violence in the streets now became common. Fights over the right-of-way among pedestrians erupted with regularity. Trivial incidents would become provocation to murder. A man would walk up to another on the street, say a few words, then draw a revolver and fire. Occasionally a heavy horse-whip would replace a more deadly weapon, but rarely were there any preliminaries to such an attack. J. F. James, a Mobilian, explained part of this during his arraignment on assault charges by observing that as he had been threatened with violence on sight, he merely wanted to strike first.³

Such self-reliance and proclivity to immediate action or retaliation would have been less disastrous except for another

¹ Robert S. Rhodes, "The Registration of Voters and the Election of Delegates to the Reconstruction Convention in Alabama," *Alabama Review*, VIII (April, 1955), 120.

² *New York Times*, August 30, 1874.

³ *Mobile Register and Advertiser*, October 6, 1865, January 20, 1866, September 8, 1865, June 21, 1866, November 17, 1865; Rhodes, "Registration," p. 130. When told not to shoot anyone by a boy three years his senior, an eighteen-year-old

frontier habit—carrying deadly weapons. Advertisements for arms were displayed prominently in the newspapers. Double-barrelled shotguns, short on range but a boon to poor shots, were all the rage, especially with the new Lefoucheur breech-loaders offering the increased firepower of cartridges. For those who preferred a weapon more easily concealed, derringers and “Colt’s Pistols” headed the list.⁴ Though the general disorder of the country during and after the war was blamed for the habit, such a milieu does not tell the whole story. Negroes purchased guns for protection and as a badge of their new freedom from slavery; whites wore them for protection and from custom.⁵ Exhibiting the temper of the times, the *Mobile Register and Advertiser* decried the ban on carrying concealed weapons so long as soldiers were present to stir up trouble and, during one outbreak of crime, noted that “Every man of fair standing should be allowed to carry weapons of defence.”⁶ Editor John Forsyth could have saved his breath. Guns were kept

turned the pistol he had just snapped upon the intruder and shot him in the chest. *Mobile Register and Advertiser*, November 17, 1865. In Greensboro John C. Orrick, a young native, walked up to Alexander Webb, colored Register of the 19th District, and shot him. A posse, raised as soon as Orrick left the street, was unable to locate the young man.

⁴ *Mobile Register and Advertiser*, October 21, 1865, December 5, 1865, November 19, 1865; Ignatius A. Few to William H. Smith, July 19, 1869, William H. Smith Papers (Alabama Department of Archives and History, Montgomery). In any hardware store’s advertisements weapons were listed first and in the boldest type. As late as 1881, the State Auditor reported \$305,613 worth of tools and farm implements, \$354,247 in guns, pistols and dirks. C. Vann Woodward, *Origins of the New South* (Baton Rouge, 1951), 160.

⁵ Walter L. Fleming, *Civil War and Reconstruction in Alabama* (Columbia, 1905), 691; *Mobile Register and Advertiser*, January 11, 1866, March 15, 1866; Cecil E. McNair, “Reconstruction in Bullock County,” *Alabama Historical Quarterly*, XV (Spring, 1953), 88-9; U. S. Congress, Senate, *The Condition of Affairs in the Late Insurrectionary States: Alabama* 42nd Congress, 2nd Session, 1872, Rept. 41, pt. 8, 75-76; hereafter cited as *Affairs in Alabama*. The three volumes relating to conditions in Alabama, parts 8, 9, and 10 are also designated as *Alabama*, Volumes I, II, and III, which designation is hereafter used.

⁶ January 11, 1866. Such appeals were often made, though a few months later it was calling for “all good, law-abiding citizens” to “no longer go armed” and “Lay aside all deadly weapons like brave men.” April 17, 1866. Evidently the “fact that guns and pistols were being fired in all parts of the city, day and night” was getting on editor John Forsyth’s nerves. April 18, 1866. The prevalence of carrying arms in Mobile can be seen in the constant convictions for that crime—December 27, 1865, December 29, 1865, for example. Violations were cited almost daily.

in almost every house, and illegal or not, everyone carried weapons. Young men generally wore pistols belted to their waist in full view, while Negroes and the older whites concealed their arms. It was a fad, just as it had been before the war, to go armed.⁷ To some, firearms were regarded as toys, to be snapped at companions as a practical joke. Everyone from newsboys to legislators carried arms, with protection from equally-armed opponents usually being the accepted reason.⁸ In an attempt to control the problem, the legislature outlawed brass knuckles and even sling shots.⁹ But more legislative ban was hardly effective in the area of weapon control. Instinct and long custom prevailed.

Violence in Reconstruction Alabama can also be explained in terms of yet another legacy. Like the influence of the frontier, the *ante bellum* social structure made its mark in Alabama. That impress had two distinct facets, both of which were manifest during Reconstruction: the loss of political power by those who had held unquestioned sway, and the fear of the Negro which was rooted in the *ante bellum* horror of a slave revolt. Throughout the *ante bellum* South whites had spoken in apprehensive whispers of a slave uprising. Neither the fact that none occurred during the war nor that of Negro freedom quieted their fears. Nat Turner and Denmark Vesey were well-remembered names. Perhaps the fear proved so tenacious because it was irrational. This problem of social control added urgency to the problem of regaining political power as the whites sought once more to make their society safe.

The fear of Negroes running amok was real indeed. Any sizable encounter between blacks and whites was heralded as the harbinger of revolt. The idea of armed Negroes, especially after the formation of the Loyal League, brought abolitionist prophecies of doom to mind. When armed Negroes stood guard at League meetings while their fellows drilled, rumors circu-

⁷ *Affairs in Alabama*, I, 75-6; II, 1166, 1318, III, 1686-7, 1835-6.

⁸ *Mobile Register and Advertiser*, November 17, 1865; Fleming *Civil War*, 759; McNair, "Bullock County," 111.

⁹ *Acts of Alabama*, 1872, 130-1. Bowie knives, too useful to outlaw, were taxed, and proved a useful source of revenue; *Acts of Alabama*, 1865, 7.

lated among the white population.¹⁰ When trouble erupted in Bladon Springs, Choctaw County, just before Christmas, 1865, the *Mobile Register and Advertiser* tried to calm fears by printing the truth. Pointing out that the excitement was hardly worth the name "insurrection," it quoted some of the rumors circulating and begged readers not to "repeat and magnify (as is almost invariably the case) such reports."¹¹ Repeatedly Forsyth pointed out the falsity of such rumors and observed that, while many had predicted a general insurrection during Christmas, no such trouble had occurred; nor was it likely to.¹² Yet until they regained power, the native white population refused to relinquish their fears. Men left women and children alone only when absolutely necessary, and then with foreboding.¹³ Negroes marched to the polls in military formation until 1876, and the riots no doubt occurred in part because of the edginess of the armed whites.¹⁴

Because they had held enough power to keep their position secure during the antebellum period, the lack of such security during Reconstruction made the position of the native whites maddening. They felt there were specific problems to be solved—problems which they assumed no one else could master. The native whites felt trapped by a corrupt government from which they could get no justice but which they were powerless to change. From the war's end until the fall of that same year, there was no real government in the State. Order, such as it was, came from the military posts and the commanders' authority. Then, as Walter L. Fleming put it, the "carpetbagger and scalawag, using the former slave as an instrument," assumed power.¹⁵ This was the crowning insult. The military which

¹⁰ Fleming, *Civil War*, 5-6, 514-15, 561-2, 565, 568; Walter L. Fleming, "The Formation of the Union League in Alabama," *Gulf States Historical Magazine*, II (September, 1903), 81-3; Albert B. Moore, *History of Alabama* (Tuscaloosa, 1934), 476; McNair, "Bullock County," 95.

¹¹ December 23, 1865. One of the rumors was that seventeen people had just been massacred at Notasulga as part of a general uprising.

¹² January 10, 12, 1866.

¹³ Letter from Mrs. Campbell Cory, quoted in Euba E. DuBose, "The History of Mount Stirling," *Alabama Historical Quarterly*, XXV (Fall, 1963), 327, 322.

¹⁴ *New York Times*, April 17, 1866; Harry P. Owens, "The Eufaula Riot of 1874," *Alabama Review*, XVI (July, 1963), 232-3, 235-6; see footnote 10 for other information on armed Negroes during elections.

¹⁵ Fleming, *Civil War*, 653-4, 656, 262-3; Moore, *Alabama*, 462.

sustained this political structure was regarded as an oppressor. Soldiers as well as outlaws in Federal uniforms gave the native whites even more cause for hatred. The occupying army was not careful and little matters were magnified, as a few soldiers gave the rest a bad name. Many of the stories have the ring of atrocity fictions. Yet true or false, word of outrages committed by soldiers and the arbitrary nature of their power circulated freely in Alabama. Much of the South heard of the arrest of the entire 44th Indiana Volunteers for depredations committed in Stevenson, Alabama, but the emphasis was on the crime rather than the arrest.¹⁶ More interesting to the former Confederates were stories of robbery and murder committed by the "Bluebellies."¹⁷ Tales of horror like the little Negro girl whose ears were cut off by a soldier because she refused his advances, were believed and repeated.¹⁸ And when soldiers shot unarmed prisoners as soon as they appeared, jailed a butcher (the victim of a robbery and assault, during which his wife was almost killed) for proffering charges against a Negro, or whipped, then dragged a white man until he almost died, the perfidity and unnatural, arbitrarily-exercised power of the military was clearly proved.¹⁹

It is no wonder that trouble erupted between the locals, both white and Negro, and the occupying forces. Fights occurred everywhere. The streets were the usual setting, as when a Negro drew a revolver on an officer, but even "a house of ill-repute" in Greenville hosted a brawl between "some citizens and soldiers."²⁰ Some idea of the local feeling can be gained by seeing not only what was said while under "soldier rule," but comments made later as well. When reporting the arbitrary punishment and imprisonment of a local citizen, editor Lon Grant of the *Gadsden Times* observed that "such injustice made the

¹⁶ Mobile, *Register and Advertiser*, September 21, 1865.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, August 25, 1865; September 4, 1865; McNair, "Bullock County," 104; Fleming, *Civil War*, 119-120.

¹⁸ Mobile, *Register and Advertiser*, January 12, 1866.

¹⁹ Fleming, *Civil War*, 500; Mobile *Register and Advertiser*, October 6, 1865; Elbert L. Watson, "Gadsden from Tepees to Steamboats," *Alabama Review*, XI (October, 1958), 252.

²⁰ Mobile *Register and Advertiser*, September 19, 1865, March 10, 1866. The Negro, Henry, was probably so quick with his gun because the troopers seemed to pick Negroes to victimize. January 7, 9, 11, 1866.

blood boil . . . and the fingers tingle to pull the trigger again on our oppressors."²¹ Editor Forsyth reprinted the more reserved remarks of a Montgomery newspaperman that "Such inhumanities should be ferretted out and the guilty parties punished severely whoever they may be. Where the civil authority has not power to act the military certainly has, and we trust between the two, no acts of the kind will be allowed to disgrace the community."²² Perhaps the best clue is in the statement of the *Eufaula News* after the shooting of two Negroes: "Such baseness and meanness, now that the Yankees have left, will not again be perpetrated with impunity in our midst. We hope, now, to see the return of law, order, and quiet; and hear no more of the robbing, shooting, or maltreating of negroes."²³ And the men these troops helped maintain in office fared no better in public opinion.

To keep power, the Republicans had to run Republicans for office, no matter how unqualified. Though there were exceptions, ignorance and corruption pervaded most levels of government. Even a Republican admitted the problems of finding qualified men of the proper political persuasion, going so far as to call the state courts "a farce." As late as 1871, three years before the government was "redeemed," the *New York Times* observed that the civil authorities were "utterly powerless to execute the laws."²⁴ When the military authorities in Montgomery permitted prostitution and legalized it by issuing licenses to "houses of ill-repute" for \$25 a week plus \$5 a week for each inmate, the local citizens complained bitterly. But when that apostle of social control, Justice of the Peace Jesse

²¹ Watson, "Gadsden," 252.

²² *Mobile Register and Advertiser*, January 12, 1866, quoting the *Advertiser* of January 9.

²³ Quoted in the *Mobile Register and Advertiser*, January 25, 1866.

²⁴ Moore, *Alabama*, 482; Fleming, *Civil War*, 656; *Affairs in Alabama*, I, 58, II, 873; *New York Times*, June 28, 1871. When the legislature passed an act authorizing the Governor to pardon men before their conviction, the native whites were sure this was simply one more attempt to keep misfits in office and outside the law's reach. *Mobile Register and Advertiser*, June 17, 1866. A Republican realized that "we had placed in power a great many incompetent officers, . . . men who were totally unfit either by their moral or their mental character to administer the laws." Lucille Griffith, *History of Alabama 1540-1900* (Northport, 1962), 341.

Hays, was sentenced to five months and a \$100 fine for prescribing a punishment for a Negro which was inapplicable to a white man, the Republicans went too far. Though merely a symbol, this Monroe County man personified the necessity for regaining Democratic control of the government.²⁵

The attempt to wrest control from the "vile wretches in power" would naturally necessitate the use of force. First, the average voters were tired of voting when they felt their votes meant nothing.²⁶ Second, the Republicans would use every hint of violence as proof of the necessity of continuing Reconstruction and even manufactures tales to prove their allegation. Democrats evidently felt that they might as well profit from what they were portrayed as doing.²⁷ And finally, the Conservatives saw their attempt to cajole the Negro vote fail. Their speakers were "insulted, stoned, and sometimes killed," while social ostracism (and more drastic measures—whipping, for instance) by and large preserved the Negro vote inviolately Republican.²⁸ Even the *New York Times* noted the fraudulent government, the unqualified leaders, and the absolute hold corruption had on much of the state government.²⁹ So the Conservatives spoke of driving out "the thieves" and convinced themselves, one by one, that "If the radicals carry this county and the state, we will be well nigh ruined."³⁰

²⁵ Fleming, *Civil War*, 416-417, 487.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 535, 542; Hilary A. Herbert, "How We Redeemed Alabama," *Century Magazine*, LXXXV (April, 1913), 854, 857; Edgar A. Stuart, "The Journal of James Mallory, 1834-1877," *Alabama Review*, XIV (July, 1961), 231.

²⁷ It was admitted by both sides that, while many were true, many of the stories of outrages were fiction. DuBose, "Stirling," 323-324; Fleming, *Civil War*, 399; John L. Sloan, "The Ku Klux Klan and the Alabama Election of 1872," *Alabama Review*, XVII (April, 1965), 114-115, 118, 120-121, 123. By the time the Republicans developed factions, the more conservative ones, like William H. Smith, charged their more radical opponents with "feeding off crime."

²⁸ Negro women were especially effective in keeping the Negro vote Republican. No Democrat got a meal cooked, clothes washed, or a warm bed, not even from his wife. On both sides, the women were more rabid than the men. Fleming, *Civil War*, 774, 778; Herbert, "Redeemed," 860; H. E. Sterkx, "William C. Jordan and Reconstruction in Bullock County, Alabama," *Alabama Review*, XV (January, 1962), 71.

²⁹ October 29, 1874, December 31, 1865, for example. Generally recognition came during the latter part of the era.

³⁰ Stewart, "Mallory Journal," 231, 232.

The milieu provided the native whites with a "feel" for violence inherited from the frontier and the *ante bellum* era, a situation aggravated by specific grievances which called for prompt action. Not only were direct methods the natural inclination; they seemed the only recourse for the "disinherited." For the Negroes and Republicans, the problem was similar. It was their presence which upset the traditional system, so it was against them that the brutality would be directed. It was a case of resist or abdicate. A feeling of suspicion and hate was in the air, and all sides—Negro, Democrat and Republican—developed a regrettable tolerance for bloodshed. But there were reasons for the adoption of violence by the Negroes and Republicans aside from the essentially negative one of self-preservation. The Republicans employed ferocity to maintain their political position (and strengthen it), to correct situations which seemingly would yield to no other solutions, and out of fear; the Negroes adopted terrorism because of their sense of freedom, the political conjurings of their leaders (Negro and white), and out of fear as well. The opposing forces gave much the same reasons for their fury—each essentially feared the other, and each saw some facet of the political scene which seemed amenable to change only through force.

The Republicans were faced with an intractable element to govern. Jesse Hays was a symbol for them as well as for the Democrats. To Republicans, Justice of the Peace Hays typified the obstinate Alabamian who refused to abide by the decision of the iron dice he had rolled. Throughout Reconstruction, Republicans had to contend with courts which could produce no justice because of lack of witnesses or because juries simply failed to convict.³¹ To those in power, justice seemed unattainable. A major Republican complaint was always of ineffective courts and local government.³² Because of this situation, the Republicans had no alternative but to reply in kind if they wished to end the intimidation of Negro Republicans. Though the Legislature could remove all penalties for

³¹ *Affairs in Alabama*, I, 58; *New York Times*, June 28, 1871; Ignatius A. Few to Smith, July 19, 1869; Colored Citizens of Tuscaloosa to Smith, April 22, 1869, William H. Smith Papers.

³² *Affairs in Alabama*, I, 58; Ignatius A. Few to Smith, July 19, 1869; Colored Citizens of Tuscaloosa to Smith, April 22, 1869, William H. Smith Papers.

killing a man if he were disguised, more direct action was called for. At every hand Republicans found the registration of Negroes opposed. The locals used every method possible "without making themselves liable to arrest by the military authorities" at first.³³ Then they escalated their activities to include night-riding and, later, murder. Officials as well as voters suffered.³⁴ Intimidation of this variety later gave way to rowdiness at Republican meetings and at the polls themselves. Riots were common on election day, and some were so bad that martial law was proclaimed and civil officials replaced because they had not been zealous in ending the fighting and protecting the freedmen.³⁵

About five thousand Northerners had come to Alabama in an apolitical capacity, and these men were readily accepted by the natives. A Republican wrote that a business partner had received only the "kindest treatment" and heartiest encouragement" from neighbors. "A Northern man," he concluded, "who is not a natural fool, or a foolish fanatic, may live pleasantly anywhere in Alabama"³⁶ But once the Yankee left business for politics, he crossed into the war zone. Often Republicans expressed the belief, privately or in public, that many Southerners were ready to renew the war, possibly by guerrilla action.³⁷ But even more insistent in the Republican's minds lurked the thought of personal danger. Outside observers noted that "Quarrels are sought with men of known Republican politics for the simple purpose of affording an opportunity to assassinate them," with their only crime being that of "remaining loyal

³³ *Acts of Alabama*, 1868, 444-6; Rhodes, "Registration," 131.

³⁴ Ignatius A. Few to Smith, July 19, 1869; Colored Citizens of Tuscaloosa to Smith, April 22, 1869; Daniel Price to Smith, October 7, 1868; John Hamilton to Smith, August 5, 1869; Jacob Fisher to Smith, June 14, 1869, William H. Smith Papers; *New York Times*, January 13, 1873. See footnote 3 for the murder of Alexander Webb, Register.

³⁵ Herbert, "Redeemed," 862; Fleming, *Civil War*, 794. The biggest riots occurred in 1874, at Mobile, Belmont, Gainesville, and Eufaula. Mobile suffered two earlier ones, in 1866 and 1869 (after the first of which martial law was proclaimed) and Patona-Cross Plains suffered in 1870. Fleming covers most of the riots. The Mobile riots made the *New York Times*.

³⁶ Rhodes, "Registration," 121; Sarah Van V. Woolfolk, "Carpetbaggers in Alabama: Tradition Versus Truth," *Alabama Review*, XV (April, 1962), 143.

³⁷ *Mobile Register and Advertiser*, March 10, 1866.

to the Government."³⁸ The atrocity stories, whether true or false, could not have helped a Republican's peace of mind; neither were they a source of solace to the freedman.

Having been slaves, the freedmen knew what to expect. They no doubt also gloried in the power their votes gave them. Now that they comprised a free work force, they also had an economic hold on their former masters. The vote, however, seemed to be their most potent weapon, and the fear that this privilege would be removed was skillfully played on by white Republicans. White Alabamians clearly displayed their resentment of the Negro franchise. Even those who had never owned slaves were opposed to this innovation, and a Republican in the state noted that these former non-slaveowners were more bitterly opposed "than any secessionist in the state." The entire white population of Mobile, observed another, had as much as declared that "the 'nigger' should not be permitted to vote there."³⁹ After spending three months in the state, a New York *Times* correspondent wrote; "in some localities they [Negroes] are treated brutally, robbed on the highway and frequently killed."⁴⁰ An antagonism quickly arose between whites and blacks, and while the Negroes no doubt armed themselves out of a sense of freedom, it was also done because for the first time they could defend themselves. There was no more need passively to accept whatever violence came to them.⁴¹

The effect of the war on society and the intemperate language used by both sides added to the explosive atmosphere. The war set the tone. A resort to public force, war-loosened the bonds of moral restraint, encouraging individuals to imitate the public example and take the law into their own hands. Since the trend could not be offset by a strong magistracy, "public

³⁸ New York *Times*, January 13, 1873.

³⁹ Rhodes, "Registration," 126, 127, quoting letters from Joseph C. Bradley (April 17, 1867) and J. Silsby (April 1, 1867) to Gen. Wager Swayne.

⁴⁰ April 17, 1866.

⁴¹ Mobile *Register and Advertiser*, January 10, 1866, August 25, 28, 1865, September 10, 1865, February 4, 1866; Herbert, "Redeemed," 854. Colored Citizens of Tuscaloosa to Smith, April 22, 1869, William H. Smith Papers. That the whites didn't like negroes carrying arms is attested to by Forsyth's editorial advising the freedmen to quit carrying concealed weapons. Mobile *Register and Advertiser*, March 15, 1866.

demoralization" followed the conflict. The *Mobile Register and Advertiser* hailed Governor Lewis H. Parsons' proclamation on the alarming prevalence of crime in the state, though it lamented the necessity for such a public statement.⁴² James Mallory, a perceptive denizen of the state, calendared the development of the war-caused lawlessness. Less than a month after Appomattox, Mallory mourned the "disorder and lawlessness through the land" and expressed the fear that "order will never be again restored." By the end of the year he observed that "Crime has become alarming, and with the strong arm of the law failing to check it, we may yet reap more bitter fruit than even from the war." In the middle of 1867, with a sense of foreboding, Mallory wondered—"what will be the result, God only knows."⁴³ This war-engendered lawlessness was encouraged by the epithets both sides delighted in employing, and by the rumors such unbridled tongues spread. Democrats and Republicans alike resorted to language calculated to infuriate the opposition; the Democrats were probably more adept at using invective, despite their inclination to action.

Republicans found themselves the butt of jokes, the objects of personal threats, members of a maligned group, and even heard Conservatives wish for a return to the gray uniform. Prodding the "oppressors" in such a way as to enjoy a laugh at their expense became a prime pastime for Alabama editors. In 1866 the *Montgomery Daily Advertiser* informed its readers of the habits of the "Puritan Reformers" (Northern missionaries). "Wife," the reported conversation went, "put the baby to sleep with some laudanum, then bring me my Bible and pistols, and come with me; I'm going to attend a meeting for the relief of the freedman and the amelioration of the human race." Two years later the same paper attempted to enlighten its clientele about the Radical. On March 14, a schoolboy "parsed Radical" for the public: "A Radical is a compound unconstitutional noun, black in person, declining in number, African gender, and desperate case, governed by niggers; and according to the Puritan rule, one ignoramous governs another." And when the Radicals complained of Southern

⁴² August 25, 1865.

⁴³ Stewart, "Mallory Journal," 228, 229, 230.

violence in 1872, the *Daily Advertiser* once again had the last word: "Ven zee Frenchman hunt zee tigarre, zee sport ees grand-manifique, but by gar ven zee tigarre hunt ze Frenchman zer ess the vaire daiable to pay." Substitute Yankee for Frenchman and 'rebel' for tiger in this quotation and the picture is true to the very life."⁴⁴ Unfortunately, the Democrats did not let the matter rest there.

As Reconstruction progressed, the language became more inflammatory. Articles speculating on the future would be given such provocative titles as "Bayonets Next."⁴⁵ A forthright challenge was issued by the *Mobile Register* in 1874. Calling on the "Blearyeyed gentry," the editor warned them that

. . . white violence will keep pace with black violence; that for one blow they shall have two, with full measure; that there shall be no more polls in quiet possession of negro mobs, and white men deterred from casting their ballots, and all under the command of carpet-bag bullies If you can beat us in voting, all right. If you can beat us at bullying, all right too. But in both cases you have got to fight for it as you have never been called upon, in Alabama, to fight before.

Calling for a virtual surrender to Caucasian Supremacy, the article concluded: ". . . first disarm your negroes, who are drilling and drum-beating everywhere, in every town and village and hill and valley, and then talk about peace to the white people."⁴⁶

While challenging the Republicans in such rash terms, the natives often spoke longingly of a return to the more dignified violence of the Confederacy period. That was a time when foes could be dealt with openly, and it bespoke a kind of

⁴⁴ Quoted in Robert Partin, "Alabama Newspaper Humor during Reconstruction," *Alabama Review*, XVII (October, 1964), 245-6. For an indication of how the Republicans were lambasted by political cartoons, see Sarah Van V. Woolfolk, "The Political Cartoons of the *Tuscaloosa Independent Monitor* and *Tuscaloosa Blade* 1867-1873," *Alabama Historical Quarterly*, XXVII (Fall, 1965), 140-165.

⁴⁵ *Mobile Register and Advertiser*, June 29, 1866.

⁴⁶ Quoted in *New York Times*, September 5, 1874.

freedom which Democrats felt they now lacked. "I am ready as before," wrote George M. Drake, editor of the *Union Springs Times*, "to bear arms to the best of my poor ability, against all infamous Radical enemies of my State and of the cause of civil liberty."⁴⁷ Often such reveries would be coupled with a personal threat, as when William C. Jordan, white Alabamian, lost his temper when confronted by a blue-uniformed officer. Pointing a steady forefinger at the uniform he recalled how he had often fired at just such a target during the war. And Jordan concluded that, unless left alone, he was willing to fight again, observing that "a pistol ball will make negro heads go up like a whirlwind."⁴⁸

The election of 1874 proved the culmination of the fight to "redeem" the state government. It was also the high point of threats delivered with political intent. The natives were intent upon ousting the Republicans and exerted every effort to do so. Sure that 1874 was their year, the Democrats warned Negroes what might be in the future. A Negro canvassing for an "ebony congressman" was matter-of-factly told by a white "You might as well quit. We have made up our minds to carry the state or kill half of you negroes on election day." Another Conservative like-wise enlightened a "sable Republican" about the coming campaign. "God damn you," he shouted, "you have voted my land down to half a dollar an acre, and I wish you was down in the bottom of hell." He then threatened personally to help send a few on their way.⁴⁹

The natives did not have a monopoly on unbridled tongues. Their political opponents were skilled in the use of invective, and they had the help of newspapers and politicians outside the state. Though hardly a danger, Chicago's "Long John" Wentworth's threat to hang Confederates "as high as Haman" was not easily forgotten. Negroes, well-aware of their freedom, at times angered men accustomed to unquestioning obedience. By stating that something was none of the questioner's business,

⁴⁷ Letter to the *Montgomery Advertiser*, quoted in the *New York Times*, November 1, 1868.

⁴⁸ H. E. Sterkx, "William C. Jordan and Reconstruction in Bullock County, Alabama," 65, 71.

⁴⁹ Fleming, *Civil War*, 792.

the freedmen would throw the native into a rage. "Insolence" and "uppity behavior" were, to the former rulers in a slave society, if not crimes, at least completely unacceptable behavior.⁵⁰ Taking their politics very seriously, the mostly-Republican former slaves regarded any Democrat in their midst as a "renegade nigger." Often an intrepid black Democrat would be greeted with cries of "Beat him; kill him; kill the Democrat devil." When questioned about washing or cooking for such a misfit, one old woman said, "Wash him a shirt? I'll wash his nose in blood."⁵¹ Coupled with Republican complaints of Democratic violence in circulars which in effect advised Republicans to do as they pleased (after all, troops and U.S. Marshals were available in case of trouble), such language infuriated the natives.⁵²

Both sides used the newspaper with great effectiveness, and except for verbal threats, the daily and weekly sheets made maddening an ever-increasing number of people a possibility. The same drunken brawl would, with opposite interpretations placed upon it, be construed by Radical papers as a murderous attack on Negroes and by Democratic journals as a Negro outrage on whites. Though newspapers were bound by law to keep within the bounds of "legitimate discussion" and "violent and incendiary articles" were banned, moderation was generally an unheard of virtue. The *Mobile Republican*, for example, was suppressed by General Pope for "instructing the negro population how, when and for what purpose to use firearms—being a direct and distinct attempt to incite them to riot and disorder."⁵³

When such open appeals to violence were made, especially considering the reasons the various groups had to resort to force, the outcome was almost inevitable. The effect of these grievances produced an extremely tense situation, especially at election time. All types of violence were perpetrated by bands and by individuals. The personal and economic manifestations of the

⁵⁰ William B. Hesseltine and Larry Gara, "Confederate Leaders in Post-War Alabama," *Alabama Review*, IV (January, 1951), 5, 18; *New York Times*, November 4, 1874; DuBose, "Mount Stirling," 322.

⁵¹ *New York Times*, November 4, 1874.

⁵² Moore, *Alabama*, 467, 486; *New York Times*, September 21, 1874.

resulting clashes were political in nature, for they would have been unnecessary had the old social structure remained—Alabama had been a two-party state before the formation of the Republican party. There was more than the normal amount of crime immediately after the war. River pirates flourished and armed bands roamed rural regions. Even the urban areas, though better policed than the outlying sections, faced an upsurge of crime. Mobile testified to that fact as Editor Forsyth remarked on the unsightliness of a particular post near the post office, generally spattered with brains and surrounded by pools of blood, and lamented the amount of crime in the city.⁵³ The activities of marauding bands were doubtless the most non-political of all. Republican and Democrat alike suffered from the roaming bands of criminals. Republicans and Conservatives also both suffered from “economic violence.” Once the Negro became a free agent, his labor was his own to sell, and agriculture, which had flourished under the hands of slaves, still required laborers. The transition from a slave to a free economy, difficult at best, was resented by employers who had to pay wages. Many found the change unbearable, and without political power to ameliorate what they considered an injustice, the “disinherited” turned to force.⁵⁵

While they generally scheduled their exploits so as to insure time to do their own work and were careful not to frighten away their own laborers, the Democratic “regulators” tried to control the hiring of Negroes. Often the poorer whites would drive Negro tenants from the more fertile lands and move in behind them. More usual was the practice of riding in and telling Negroes who to work for and at what price, then threatening drastic measures if matters went contrary to orders. Often employers of former slaves would see gin houses, fences, and stock destroyed or their employees “maltreated” because

⁵³ Fleming, *Civil War*, 497; *New York Times*, March 26, 1866, June 3, 1867.

⁵⁴ *Mobile Register and Advertiser*, January 9, 1866, December 2, 1865. One of the big Mobile stories from December, 1865 through May of the next year was of the band of guerrillas on the Tombigbee who captured the steamboat *Lilly* and attempted to sink the *Belfast*. In North Alabama brigandage was such that guerrilla warfare was the practical result as “Federal and Confederate deserters, and bushwackers and outlaws of every description” fought each other. Fleming, *Civil War*, 654, 264-8; Moore, *Alabama*, 463.

⁵⁵ Fleming, *Civil War*, 654, 264-8.

they had hired the wrong freedmen⁵⁶ Wherever the Negro turned he faced trouble because he was an economic threat to one group or another. White transient workers clashed with freedmen on the Mobile and Girard Railroad near Union Springs over the question of jobs on the railroad.⁵⁷ And even in politics, the Negro proved a threat as he voted land prices down.⁵⁸ This was just a part of the link between economics and politics in Reconstruction Alabama. The connection of personal violence with political preferences was even closer.

At first, political violence was at a minimum in Alabama. A war-weariness or apathy settled like a damp fog on the populace; the Republicans faced no real political opposition during their first year of power. Then trouble began in earnest.⁵⁹ Personal brutality had in the beginning been just that—man to man. The leaders of both sides were open game—it seemed the rules of the contest.⁶⁰ Shortly after Appomattox, however, two groups were formed which largely took the political aspect of savagery from the individual and institutionalized it. The Union or Loyal League was a Republican organization mainly for its fledglings, the freedmen; the Ku Klux Klan became the Democrats' answer to the League threat.⁶¹

In their incipient stages, the League and the Klan were completely different. While the League was primarily a political organization, the Klan was a social club which rapidly became an association of regulators banded together to provide protection for its adherents and a measure of social control.⁶²

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 682, 729; *Mobile Register and Advertiser*, May 8, 1866; Elkor Malichi to Smith, July, 1869, William H. Smith Papers.

⁵⁷ McNair, "Bullock County," 88. One Negro was killed and one wounded. The whites suffered no casualties, the only one brought into court being acquitted.

⁵⁸ Fleming, *Civil War*, 792.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 677.

⁶⁰ *New York Times*, January 13, 1873; Hesseltine and Gara, "Leaders," 18.

⁶¹ For information on the League, see Fleming, "Union League." For biased accounts of the Ku Klux Klan, see Stanley F. Horn, *Invisible Empire: The Story of the Ku Klux Klan 1866-1871* (Boston, 1939) or Susan L. Davis, *Authentic History of the Ku Klux Klan* (New York, 1924). Miss Davis's father organized the first Alabama den at Athens.

⁶² Toward the end of the era, people began to say that the Klan had been formed to counter the League. See Fleming, "Loyal League," 88; Fleming, *Civil War*, 655; McNair, "Bullock County," 100.

Despite the dissimilarity during their inchoate period, both groups soon became tools in the struggle for political power in Alabama. Bands of Negroes and bands of whites roamed the countryside, especially at night. Alabamians become so familiar with this Ku Klux Klan method of political persuasion and social control that whenever anyone suffered from any group of disguised men he was considered "kukluxed." The political activities of these groups were largely confined to a few months before each election, but the frenzy was most intense in 1868 and 1874.

The 1868 outbreak was mainly perpetrated by the Klan and occasioned by the failure of the natives to enlist Negro support for the Democratic Party.⁶³ "Jail delivery" became popular, as Klansmen (and later others) freed prisoners from their confinement to insure "justice"—releasing those considered unjustly incarcerated and punishing others (often by death).⁶⁴ The troubles of 1874 were the culmination of the political power struggle. Sensing victory, the Democrats redoubled their efforts, and fearing defeat, the Republicans countered with all the force at their disposal. As early as July, Governor Lewis received letters from the Black Belt complaining of turmoil.⁶⁵ Factions formed within the Republican Party, and the hatred between the two was so intense that civil war almost erupted.⁶⁶ Though busy fighting among themselves, the Republicans found time to insult, stone and kill Democrats, break up meetings, shoot into Democratic homes, and force conservatives to hide out at night.⁶⁷ Both parties ran full slates of officers, county as well as state, and feelings ran even higher. Vehement

⁶³ J. Roneryne to Charles Miller, October 15, 1868; N. H. Rice to William B. Figures, November 3, 1868; John H. Wager to Smith, William H. Smith Papers. See also U. S. Congress, House, 40th Congress, 3rd Session, House Misc. Doc. 23, *Outrages by Ku-Klux Klan*. "

⁶⁴ For examples of this common practice, see *Affairs in Alabama*, I, 57; II, 1480; *Mobile Register and Advertiser*, April 3, 1866.

⁶⁵ Edward G. Williamson, "The Alabama Election of 1874," *Alabama Review*, XVII (July, 1964), 217.

⁶⁶ Fleming, *Civil War*, 774; *New York Times*, October 26, 1874; Herbert, "Redeemed," 860.

⁶⁷ Fleming, *Civil War*, 774, 778. One Negro complained that his children were beaten by the others at school. The teacher explained that nothing better could be expected so long as he remained a Democrat.

language became the rule and few political rallies lasted the appointed length of time. When meetings were held to agree on candidates for city offices, the discussion became so heated that fights often resulted.⁶⁸

Troops were requested to deal with the difficulties. The Republicans, in a numerical minority, sent numerous urgent requests for a company or so of soldiers and usually a few marshals as well.⁶⁹ Little word of trouble leaked out of south Alabama, but from the north and west came stories in profusion. The Ku Klux Klan, Men of Justice, the Order of Peace, and Knights of the White Camelia fought with the various "unaffiliated" groups of natives against the Loyal League and various Anti-KKK leagues (Mossbacks in Fayette County).⁷⁰ Joseph G. Hester, a special agent for the Justice Department, summed the situation up concisely when he remarked that he had "rather be in the heart of Comanche country than in Sumter County without soldiers."⁷¹

The occasion which focused national attention upon Alabama's internal disorder was the occurrence of two murders in Sumter County. The first murder, that of lawyer W. P. Billings, was mentioned in the *New York Times*. But on October 6, under the headlines "The Murdered Route Agent" and "Warrants for the Arrest of Nine of the Murderers, Including the Sheriff of Sumter County," violence in Alabama gained national notoriety. For a month, the murder of Billings and Thomas Ivey rated front page coverage. Several Sumter County citizens—Stephen S. Renfroe, a prominent farmer and presumable instigator of the killings; Charles H. Bullock; P. A. Hillman; and W. L. (Fred) Childs—were carried to Mobile to stand trial for both crimes. In the follow-up story on November 24, the *Times* ran a two-column spread on the accused, the trial,

⁶⁸ Herbert, "Redeemed," 854, 860; McNair, "Bullock County," 117. In one such fight one Negro hit through the underlip of another, while a companion "bit a plug from the cheek of an adversary." Quoted from the *Union Springs Herald and Times*, January 13, 1875.

⁶⁹ Owens, "Riot," 231.

⁷⁰ Griffith, *Alabama*, 322, 341, 483; Fleming, *Civil War*, 657-660, 514-15, 561-2, 565, 690; Fleming, "Loyal League," 75, 81-2; Horn, *Empire*, 136; *Affairs in Alabama*, II, 721, 1172.

⁷¹ Williamson, "Alabama Elections," 217.

and an "exclusive interview."⁷² Concluding the story of the trial, the *Times* observed that, despite a Negro politician's threat to "carry Sumter County or ride chin-deep in blood," there was no evidence of a political connotation for the murders.⁷³ Such political connections were admittedly hard to find—these incidents merely seemed part of the general trend toward anarchy. But violence was on the wane. As early as 1869 Alabamians had been warned by scalawag Alexander H. White to "Let bygones be bygones." He had had "enough of the bayonet" and would rather "rely on the ballot instead."⁷⁴ The Klan, "symbol of violence in disguise," lost public support.⁷⁵ Alabamians had learned the infinite advantages of fraud at the ballot boxes.

Where intimidation had been successful, the Democrats faced no trouble, though occasionally they simply found it necessary to count out the Negro vote or destroy the ballots.⁷⁶ The polls were carefully guarded by Democrats, and every highway leading into the state was monitored "to prevent the importation of voters." Railroad officials carefully noted every "foreign Negro" who arrived and at what station he debarked.⁷⁷ The New York *Times* chronicled the relative quiet of the election after the turbulence of the pre-election fury. The writer observed that police from Columbus, Georgia, had taken over the polls at Girard, in Russell County, but did not comment upon the effect of this action. That fraud had replaced violence, however, the correspondent was certain. With the aid of hindsight, a much later article realized that, while fraud had replaced violence in the last election, "the knowledge existed in the mind of every colored man that the Democrats would have resorted to violence if simple fraud had not availed."⁷⁸

⁷² August 14, 1874.

⁷³ October 6, 7, 8, 20, November 24, 1874; January 10, 1875. See also unpublished manuscript on Stephen S. Renfroe by William Warren Rogers. Ms. in private possession.

⁷⁴ Sarah Van V. Woolfolk, "Alabama Attitudes Toward the Republican Party in 1868 and 1964," *Alabama Review*, XX (January, 1967), 29-30.

⁷⁵ Horn, *Empire*, 144.

⁷⁶ Fleming, *Civil War*, 798, 800. The Eufaula riot resulted in the unfortunate destruction of enough Republican votes to ensure a Democratic victory. See Owens, "Eufaula Riot."

⁷⁷ Herbert, "Redeemed," 861.

⁷⁸ January 4, 1875, October 9, 1876. The correspondent wrote that "The proscription, social ostracism, withdrawal of business and loss of employment

Thus did the pattern of violence end in Alabama. Perhaps the most significant indicator of the changed attitude was Grand Cyclops Ryland Randolph. For despite his earlier firey-tongued eloquence, the Tuscaloosa editor now called for peace. In an editorial entitled "Let Murders Cease" he realized that "We now have a sheriff of our choice, and we must sustain him"⁷⁹ Violence had ended because, having regained political power, the natives could correct the inequities by which they had felt oppressed and exercise social and economic control "legally." A few individuals were convinced that the trouble had always been due to simple reasons. A New York *Times* correspondent related that those to whom he talked blamed the turbulence on drunkenness.⁸⁰ Others cited a break-down of communications between the two sides, which led to the accession to power of bad men.⁸¹ The New York *Times* observed darkly that Alabama learned to kill men for opinion's sake, and "she is now showing how power, secured by the deadly bullet of the assassin, may be perpetuated by the bogus ballot of the Registrar."⁸² The democratic process was, of course, ignored. Power once attained, had to be kept. There was no chance for a return to the situation of Reconstruction Alabama, but that it was politically rooted is shown by the decrease in violence once the natives regained their accustomed place of power.

In Reconstruction Alabama, violence became an instrument of policy, an instrument used by all segments of the political spectrum. The moderates as well as both extremes either believed or found it a necessity. The savagery's form varied, and it was used both as an offensive and as a defensive weapon. While its immediate effects can be measured, or at least docu-

among Republicans" was due to politics, and that such action caused "thousands of voters" to be lost by the Republicans.

⁷⁹ Quoted in Horn, *Empire*, 140.

⁸⁰ March 26, 1866. This view was given some credence by the Montgomery *Advertiser's* observation that "one of the most favorable signs of a better day dawning" was "the decline in the drinking of whiskey," a beverage which was losing its place to lager beer. Quoted in the *Mobile Register and Advertiser*, April 24, 1866.

⁸¹ Rhodes, "Registration," 141. This would help account for the fear and wild rumors prevalent on both sides.

⁸² October 9, 1876.

mented, the use of force to achieve political ends and influence every facet of life—social and economic as well as political—had far-ranging consequences. Such a resort to violence proved a tragic precedent for the nation, especially the New South, for even while fostering a permissive attitude toward violence, this experience showed that such a course of action could be successful, especially when the cost was ignored.

DANIEL R. HUNDLEY'S CONTRIBUTION TO FOLKLORE

By

Tommy W. Rogers

Daniel R. Hundley was born in Lawrence County, Alabama, in 1832 and died in Madison County in 1862. A graduate of the University of Virginia and the law department at Harvard, Hundley spent an active life as a soldier (a colonel in the Confederate army and POW at Johnsons Island), businessman, lawyer, planter, and author. Although a contributor to various periodicals, Hundley is best remembered for his classic interpretation of social stratification in the South, *Social Relations In Our Southern States*.¹

Hundley felt that many of the characterizations of the Southerner and the Southern way of life produced by "Englishmen, Frenchmen, Down-Eastern men, the Bloomer style of men, as well as countless numbers of female scribblers," generally, due to ignorance and malice, provided a gross misrepresentation of the "Summer Land." Hundley was particularly incensed by the tendency for the "honey-tongued libellers of the Southern half of our Confederacy . . . to be totally unconscious that her citizens were ever divided into other than three classes—Cavaliers, Poor Whites, and Slaves." "Whoever looks to such a source for any useful information," he observed; "might just as reasonably expect to gather lillies off a bramble-bush, or to find the age of a maiden aunt in the family register."²

Hundley divided Southern society into the six distinct classes of Southern gentlemen, cotton snob, middle classes, Southern yankee, Southern bully, poor white trash, and Negro slaves. In providing a description of these classes Hundley was writing about the life around him—the idiom of people, appearance, manners, customs, folkways, speech, values, atti-

¹ Daniel R. Hundley, *Social Relations In Our Southern States* (New York: Henry B. Price, 1860).

² *Ibid.*, 8.

tudes, and general style of life which allowed him to distinguish different plateaus of more or less homogeneous groups on the basis of their cultural characteristics. Much of his *Social Relations* is a description of personality types, illustrative anecdotes and vignettes, scenes, travel accounts, and stories.

Various types of personalities, which seem to be common to different eras and epochs of time appear throughout Hundley's book. One of the earliest personality characterizations is of the rather frequently encountered individual who views the wrinkles, gray hair, and concomitant physical attributes of mid-life as rebukes to be resisted and flatly refuses to permit the feeling of being "old" to enter his mind.³ Hundley described this common folk type as the "Old Boy." Hundley told of his encounter with "quite a portly old gentleman—must have stood at least six feet in his stockings—with a red face and very white hair; a bachelor withal, hearty and jovial, and a pretty fair specimen of what one might fitly call an Old Boy" in illustrating the comparative rurality of the South.

Hundley encountered the Old Boy while traveling on the Mississippi. He was described as "a respectable member of the middle classes, intelligent and courteous, though somewhat of a cockney" who was on his first visit Southward:

Being such an Old Boy, he was not above associating with young gentlemen many years his junior, but seemed on the contrary to prefer such company to that of the seniors; and so we became quite familiar Rubbing his hands together with delight, and thridding (sic) his way nervously from deck to deck with hundreds of travelers, in the brief space of half an hour he must have informed near upon twenty different individuals that he was a New-Yorker, Sir; and was on his first visit to the South, Sir; . . . so long as the bustle and confusion lasted, our bachelor

³ For discussion of this and other types of adjustment to the psychosociological concomitants of aging see A. L. Vischer, *On Growing Old* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1967), 33-47; Milton L. Barron, *The Aging American: An Introduction to Social Gerontology and Geriatrics* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Co., 1961), 146-148; D. B. Bromley, *The Psychology of Human Ageing* (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1966), 100-111.

acquaintance seemed pleased with everything about him. So long had he been used to the continuous hum and noise of the large city—so long had he been accustomed to being jostled about at every turn—that to him *unrest* seemed to be the only species of *rest* of which he knew anything. This fact became painfully apparent after his first day's travel on the Mississippi; . . . it was still plain as a pike-staff that in his own mind he connected the vast solitude, in the awful stillness whereof he seemed to be dying, with the "curse of slavery." For a long time he endured the horror of the situation . . . but at last . . . he came up to use in a pompous manner, and says he, very energetically, giving his inexpressibles a nervous hitch at the same time, and striving hard to *look* unutterable things—says he: "WHERE'S YOUR TOWNS?"

Hundley thought the question so characteristic and uttered with such meaning and animation that "we could not refrain from turning aside to have a quiet laugh."⁴ Hundley pointed out that most Northerners used to the noise of cities and mechanical trades would propound just such a question "never once reflecting that cotton, sugar, rice, wheat, corn, tobacco, and all other agricultural products, grow only in the country, and very *quietly* too at that." Even when passing a princely plantation whose owner could buy half-a-dozen New England villages with a single year's crop "they will whisper confidentially in your ear: 'Ah! Sir, how unlike our thrifty Down East villages!'" "It is natural," Hundley observed, "for the city cockney to find the country dull, and to wonder without affectation how people manage to live there; and it is equally natural for the sun-embrowned farmer, after one week's sojourn in the town, to find it excessively boring, and to wonder how any body can make money honestly where they neither sow turnips nor raise garden 'sass.'"⁵

A somewhat related folk type, often a spinster, is the person who would do away with pleasures enjoyed by others but in which one cannot himself partake, or who is fond of giving

⁴ Hundley, 24-26.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 26-27.

advice as a compensation for not being able to set bad examples.⁶ In describing those "doughty individuals who bawl loudest and fiercest against (not the abuses of wealth, but) wealth, [and] are the very fellows, if the truth were known, who in their heart honor riches most, and who run thereafter with greatest greed," but who, upon finding that the coveted treasure continues to elude their grasp, enviously "resolve not to permit those who do possess the coveted price to enjoy it in any peace or comfort," Hundley states:

... Such honest worthies remind one of those leathery blue-stocking damsels who, (after having baited their man-traps for full thirty years or more with every delicate morceau known to female ingenuity, but all in vain,) finding themselves in the autumn of their days shrivelled and hideous, rail so indignantly against matrimony, and sneer so virtuously at the buxom charms of a blooming girl of sixteen, whose fresh young life and healthy heartbeats *will* make her the synosure and idol of her gentleman friends . . .

Hundley likened the same to "factious demagogues, whose oily tongues are always appealing *to* the PEOPLE and *for* the PEOPLE, . . . and in their hearts care no more for the dear people than the purring tom-cat cares for the mouse he tenderly fondles before eating."⁷

One of Hundley's stories is for given for the purpose of illustrating the Southerner's love of military titles "bestowed without regard to any sort of military service and upon all sorts of people." He noted that the military fever raged to such an extent in some localities that "a stranger would concluded at least every other male citizen to be 'Captain, or Co-lo-nel, or Knight at arms'" and would not great err since "in some favored districts, he would find more than every other man a military chieftain of some sort or other." Hundley's antedote of "The weakness for sounding handles to one's name" concerned a gentleman crossing the Potomac "into Virginia, with his horse, in a ferry-boat, the ferrymen said: no more."

⁶ Vischer, 44-45.

⁷ Hundley, 124-125.

‘Major, I wish you would lead your horse a little forward!’

He immediately did so, observing to the man:

‘I am not a Major, and you must not call me one.’

To this the ferryman replied:

“Wall, Kurnel, I ax your pardon, and I won’t call you so

Having arrived at the landing-place, he led his horse out of the boat, and said:

‘My good friend, I am a very plain man; I am neither a Colonel nor a Major—I have not title at all, and I don’t like them. How much have I to pay you?’

The ferryman gazed at him a while in astonishment and silence, but at last exclaimed:

‘By jinkers! you ar’ the fust white man that I ever crossed this ferry with who warn’t jist nobody at all; an’ I swar, Kur-a-Cap-O dangnation! Wall, dod seize me, *Squire*, you shan’t pay not a red cent—you allers can go over this ferry scot free—if you shan’t hang old Jake Wiggins!’ ”⁸

The peculiar characteristics of Negro religion in the South have been the object of considerable description. As the religion of any group is colored by its social context and circumstance, so has the religious behavior of the American Negro had a distinct flavor developed from the social background and habitat of the Negro. Religion among ante-bellum Negroes filled emotional, psychological, and emotional functions, and was a primary means of social adjustment, and certain features of Christianity were accentuated by this group in an effort to adjust to their experience in America.⁹ In discussing the religious manifestations among the Negroes Hundley suggested

⁸ *Ibid.*, 127-128; For discussion of the Southerner’s propensity for military titles see Edgar T. Thompson, “The Climatic Theory of the Plantation,” *Agricultural History*, XV (January, 1941), 49; Robert D. Meade, “The Military Spirit of the South,” *Current History*, XXX (April, 1929), 55; James C. Bonner, “The Historical Basis of the Southern Military Tradition,” *Georgia Review*, XIX (April, 1955), 3-14; John H. Franklin, *The Militant South* (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 1956), 1-14.

⁹ Ruby F. Johnson, *The Development of Negro Religion* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1954), 1-17.

that "few of the negroes entertain perfectly correct ideas concerning the Gospel of Jesus Christ," but, he added, "we don't believe one white man in a hundred entertains ideas perfectly correct and rational thereto." Hundley noted a tendency for the blacks to "weave into the simple story of the Cross the tangled threads of their own crude fancies and imaginings" so that "the poor creatures recount their dreams and visions about hell-hounds chasing them many a weary mile, with others equally apocryphal."

Hundley also recorded that the Negroes entertained peculiar ideas about heaven and hell:

... But there is one thing which they always dwell on with peculiar delight, and in which there may be a grain of truth—that after death they are to be changed into white folks. Their idea of hell is, that the Devil is a black man, with horns and forked tail, a raw-headed-and-bloody-bones old fellow, who literally burns up the wicked with fire and brimstone. Their idea of heaven is, that in the New Jerusalem they will walk along pavements of gold with silver slippers on, and blessed with straight hair and a fair complexion.¹⁰

"They are usually pious members of the Church in full fellowship," Hundley wrote in describing the slaves of Christian masters, "are great on quotations from 'scripter,' and oftentimes aspire to become preachers or exhorters." He also noted they "were often very sensible and practical in their remarks, though sometimes in their manner and mode of expressing their thoughts a little ludicrous, thus giving rise to many amusing anecdotes (sic)." Hundley presented an illustration of a characteristic instance of this kind:

... A sable "Brudder," whom we will call Brudder Jones, being deeply impressed with the story of Zaccheus, conceived of the idea of employing the same, in illustration of the way in which the "bredderen" ought to "use de means of grace," and lay hold on "de tree of life" in time, "for,

¹⁰ Hundley, 349-350.

my bredderen," he exclaimed triumphantly, "little Zacch'us was boun' to see de Lord for shure, dough he had to climb up de tree to do it. And how did he got up der tree? Ah! how did he got up der tree, my bredderen? Did he wait for some lazy nigger to brung him a ladder? Ah! no, my bredderen. Did he wait to be boosted? Ah no, my bredderen; not a boost, ah! He clumbed right straight up de tree hisseff, like de possum, by his own hands and feet and de grace of God, ah!"¹¹

Hundley noted that in a majority of cases middle class planters were kind masters who not infrequently labored in company with them:

. . . Like the Southern Gentleman, he usually owns one or two very old 'family negroes'—heirlooms which have come down from a past generation—and to those he pays the utmost deference. They are the plantation oracles, in fact, without consulting whom the plantation machinery and everything else would go to wreck and ruin. They are respectfully called *Uncle* by black and white, old and young, and usually possess a very sage, sobre look, shake their heads with the utmost gravity, and are equally remarkable for their piety and their love of a wee drop too much of the 'critter' on all holiday occasions.¹²

The "plantation oracle" Negroes were constantly giving their master advice and always looked upon him as young. Hundley also noted that the Negroes had a propensity for animated song, often accompanied by keeping time with the feet and clapping hands. He felt that their jovial nature found them "indulging at all times in snatches of song, and giving vent to the most stunning peals of laughter" was due to the salubrious influence of slavery:

No matter where they may be or what they may be doing, indeed, whether alone or in crowds, at work or at play, ploughing through the steaming maize in the sultry

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 89.

¹² *Ibid.*, 88.

heat of June, or bared to the waist and with deft hand mowing down the yellow grain, or trudging homeward in the dusky twilight after the day's work is done—always and everywhere they are singing and happy, happy in being free from all mental cares or troubles, and singing heartily and heartily as the birds sing, which toil not nor do spin.¹³

Hundley thought that the songs of Negro slaves were “usually wild and indescribable, seeming to be mere snatches of song rather than any long continuous effort, but with an often recurring chorus, in which all join with a depth and clearness of lungs truly wonderful.” He recalled the “wildest and most striking negro song we think we ever listen to” as having occurred on a steamboat trip up the Alabama from Mobile to Montgomery:

. . . We were steaming up from Mobile on a lovely day in the early winter, and came in sight of Montgomery just as the heavens were all a-glow with the last crimson splendor of the setting sun, and while the still shadows of evening seemed already to be stealing with noiseless tread along the hollows in the steep riverbanks, creeping slowly thence with invisible footsteps over the placid surface of the stream itself. A lovelier day or a more bewitching hour could not well be imagined. As we began to near the wharf, the negro boatmen collected in a squad on the bow of the boat, and one dusky fellow, twirling his wool hat above his head, took the lead in singing, improvising as he sang, all except the chorus, in which the whole crew joined with enthusiasm The scene is all before us now—the purple-tinted clouds overhead—the dim shadows treading noiselessly in the distance—the gleaming dome of the State Capitol and the church-spires of Montgomery—the almost perfect stillness of the hour, broken only by the puff, puff of the engine and the wild music of the dusky boatmen—and above all, the plump, well-defined outlines of some sable Sally, who stood on the highest red cliff near the landing-place, and, with joy in her heart . . . waved a flaming

¹³ *Ibid.*, 344-345.

bandanna with every demonstration of rejoicing at the return of her dusky lover.¹⁴

Hundley stated that he could not fail to contrast the happy voices of these children of oppression "with the mournful wail at that very hour going up from all the streets and parks of our greatest metropolis—the wail of the unemployed clamoring for Work or Bread!"¹⁵

Hundley's characterization of Negro traits was typical of the Negro's image of folk parlance—a happy, carefree, superstitious, lazy and improvident creature faithfully devoted to his master and a good worker under strict supervision.¹⁶ Hundley expressed the opinion that "the great mass of slaves do not know or care anything at all about freedom, and spend their money just as soon as they get it." He also noted them to be inclined to drowsy headiness at work but given to dancing in the moon-light, night-fishing, banjo-playing, and chit-chatting till the early hours of the morning.¹⁷

The shrewd trader, the horse-jockey, and its modern counterpart of the automobile salesman, is another frequently encountered type of folk character. The slave traders of the South were an ubiquitous lot who could be seen at the general stores, taverns, county fairs, and plantations.¹⁸ The slave trader was generally held in considerable opprobrium by the Southern populace and was suspected of frequent resort to unethical practices.¹⁹ Hundley pictured the slave trader as a "course ill-bred person, provincial in speech and manners, with a cross-looking phiz, a whiskey-tinctured nose, cold hard-looking eyes,

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 345.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*; Cf.: Wilfred Carsel, "The Slaveholder's Indictment of Northern Wage Slavery," *Journal of Southern History*, VI (November, 1940), 504-520.

¹⁶ James H. Penrod, "Minority Groups In Old Southern Humor," *Southern Folklore Quarterly*, XXII (September, 1958), 121-128; Claude H. Nolen, *The Negro's Image in the South* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1967), 4-16.

¹⁷ Hundley, 342-358.

¹⁸ John Hope Franklin, *From Slavery to Freedom: A History of Negro Americans* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1967), 176.

¹⁹ J. W. Randall, *The Civil War and Reconstruction* (Boston: D. C. Heath, 1961), 64-65; Wilbert E. Moore and Robin E. Williams, "Social Stratification in the Ante-Bellum South," *American Sociological Review*, VII (June, 1942), 345.

a dirty tobacco-stained mouth, and shabby dress." While the slave trader was cruel in his treatment of slaves, Hundley thought that his greatest guilt consisted of his arts of salesmanship: "combing their kinky heads into some appearance of neatness," rubbing "oil on their dusky faces to give them a sleek healthy color," and providing them "a dram occasionally to make them sprightly" plus "ingenious lying" were part of his portfolio. Hundley gave an account by which an "oily-tongued Negro Speculator" sold a murderer to a virtuous and unsuspecting household:"

"Well, Gin'ral, look o'here now Tell you what, Sir, he's worth his weight in gold. Cost me adjactly fifteen hundred dollars, and cheap as dirt! His master . . . was a pertickler friend o'mine, and so he says to me when he broke, says he: 'Dick—(he allers call' me Dick)—'Dick,' says he, 'I want you take Alf . . . I'll give him to you, bein's hit's you, for *fifteen* hundred, but ary another white man wouldn't toch him with a dime less n'r *two thousand*; for I know you, Dick, of old—you can be relied on for doin' what you, and sayin' what you do. You is honest, Dick, and I hope you will give the Gin'ral my 'espects, and tell him to treat Alf Kindly.' " Now you see, Gin'ral, that's the way I combe by Alf."²⁰

The "Cotton Snob" represented a type of folk character to which Hundley frequently alluded. The Cotton Snob appears frequently in Hundley's illustrations of human foibles. The Cotton Snob was the type who "shuns the society of the poor man as he would the plague, but clasps every brother Croesus to his bosom with the most unfeigned delight" and knows "no wittier thing to say about a person praised for his virtues than to say 'Ah! yes, very clever, I dare say, but poor as Job's turkey.'"²¹

One of Hundley's portraits of the Cotton Snob was witnessed in the Exchange Hotel, Richmond. A Charlestonion was discussing his plans for a party at the registry-desk and, as he

²⁰ Hundley, 143.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 176.

spoke, turned his head from side to side in the persuasion in his own mind that he was cutting a swell:

"Now you see," said he, "I desire to give a very *select pawty*, ye kno', and I want it to be just the thing. Do you think it would be altogether *recherche*, proper, and *the thing*, to have it in the Ladies Ordinary? Aw, now? Would that be *distingue* enough, my deah sir? You see, I live a mile or two out of Chawlstun, South Cawolina—have a very nice *recherche*, and elegant Bachelor's Hall there, in which I entertain my friends in the most *distingue* style two or three times every week, when I'm at home, ye kno'; and I would not like to give the pawty here in Wichmond, that was not just *the thing*. We Cawolinians must keep up the weputation of our gallant Commonwealth, ye kno'—the land of Chivalwig, ye kno'."²²

Hundley stated that he would have laughed out loud at the absurd figure except for the mortification he felt that the individual in question was a fellow Southerner. Another "chance adventure" involving, in this case, a couple of "Northern Snobs" occurred in a country railroad depot in Alabama. Two New York Coxcombs were engaged in a stilted conversation "which was one continuous flow of 'dictionary words' and 'my death f'la,' and 'twue,' 'twue,' and 'I dessay,' 'I dessay.'" To have heard our "*distingue* fops" one would think "they dined regularly with Mr. Buchanan and his whole Cabinet, and besides were intimately acquainted with all the leading statesmen in the Union." They were particularly admirers of Prentice, of Louisville, and S. S. Prentiss, of Mississippi, and discussed their respective merits with volubility:

"But, my deah f'la," said one of them during the conversation on this topic, "They tell me that Prentice, of the Louisville *Courier* . . . has had stroke of pawalysis lately."

"Beg your pawdon, my deah fwiend," replied his companion, "but I am intimately acquainted with Mistaw Pwentice, and saw him not two weeks ago, when he was pweffectly well."

²² *Ibid.*, 177-178.

“Ah! twue, I dessay. Then it was Pwentice of Mississippi who is paralyzed. I knew it was one of them, but did not remember distingly wich.”²³

Inasmuch as S. S. Prentiss had been deceased for more than five years, the unrestrained overflow of merriment of other passengers advised “our worthy young sparks that they had been making the most consummate asses of themselves.” “But,” Hundley added, “though in so unwelcome a manner advised of the fact, and while they evidently entertained the opinion that they were ‘the observed of all observers,’ they yet did not possess native wit enough to perceive wherein their blunder lay; but blushing, stammering, and in the blankest confusion, continued to make matters worse and worse by their fruitless efforts at explanation, until even the writer, serious and self-possessed as he fancied himself, was constrained finally to join in the general laugh.”²⁴

Another folk character whose ways were depicted by Hundley was the “swearing, tobacco-chewing, brandy drinking Bully, whose chief delight is to hang about the doors of village grogeries and tavern taprooms, to fight chicken cocks, to play Old Sledge, or pitch-and-toss, chuck-a-luck, and the like.” The Southern Bully was the product of the dram-shop or groggery. Hundley described the groggery in which “the Southern Bully so delights to lounge and drink, drink and lounge, and lounge and drink again, until he is fitly prepared for bets, brawls, oaths, blasphemies, quarrels, bruises, stabbings, shootings, man-slaughters, murders” as a small wooded building with one room for card playing and another for the retailing of ardent spirits. The groggery-keeper was described as “usually stout of person, being bloated from constant imbibing, and possesses a coarse beard, a blotched and otherwise spotted face, a red nose, hard, cold, watery and inflamed eyes” and as “usually a man of uncultivated mind, devoid of principle, habitually a blasphemer and Sabbath-breaker, a reviler of religion.” His speech was described as “low, vulgar and obscene, a retailer of stale jests and disgusting stories of scandal and intrigue, and with every

²³ *Ibid.*, 179-180.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 181.

sentence belches forth from his accursed throat oaths and blasphemy."²⁵

The groggery-keeper was also adept at mixing such ingredients as water, log-wood, juniper berries, dog-leg tobacco, and even strychnine in his liquors. Fortunately, Hundley noted, not infrequently water predominated so that he had heard of instances even in the mild latitude of Mississippi where genuine Old Rye had been known to freeze during a cold snap.

The Southern Bully was equally fond of the tap-room of the village tavern. Hundley pictured the tavern as "proverbially a dreary, dull, and ennui-begetting place" which on occasion became a sort of pandemonium so that even in the midst of so much lying, drinking, fighting, and cheating, there is much to be witnessed that (sic) is both entertaining and diverting." Hundley acknowledged that despite the rough company and the big-bellied black bottles frowning darkly in the shadowy background" on long evenings the village bar-room fire of glowing hickorylogs could send a cheerful thrill through the frame and dispose even the most unsocial to fun and merriment:

... Hence, when the evening shades begin to appear, having first supped and attended to their horses, the drovers consider that the day's labors are finished, and feel prepared to devote the evening wholly to social pleasures. So "mine host" has a roaring big fire built up in the broad fire-place of the bar-room, and enconscing himself snugly in the chimney corner, with a well-filled pipe in his mouth, waits anxiously for the story-telling to begin—for yarn spinning is usually the chief feature of the evening's entertainment. Pretty soon assemble the village groggery-keepers, and all the loose young bucks about town, two or three of the drovers, a Cotton Snob or so about 'alf and 'alf, and may be, some rattling, hare-brained son of a neighboring gentleman, whose untamed spirit is not sufficiently under parental control, . . . Nor is it long before all ideas of caste are forgotten; and as the fire blazes brighter and brighter,

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 226-227.

and the bottle begins to circle more freely, and the jests and laughter become more and more uproarious, whites and blacks guffawing and huzzaing in chorus, no wonder the hours glide unperceived away; and often it is long after midnight before the merry wassailers retire to bed.²⁶

The "poor white" represents a folk character who has been a stock literary figure whose traits and capers have been described in portraits of the Southern landscape from such antebellum writers as Longstreet and Cobb (authors of *Georgia Scenes* and *Mississippi Scenes* respectively) to more recent penmen as Faulkner and Caldwell. Hundley's account of the "Poor White Trash" attempted "to see them as they are." Although they possessed pretty much the same "characteristics, the same vernacular, the same boorishness, and the same habits" irrespective of locality, they were known by different names in various areas: Squatters in the Deep South; Crackers or Sandhillers in Georgia and the Carolinas; Rag-Tag and Bobtail in Virginia; and "People in the Barrens" in Tennessee. Hundley observed that folklore attributed the overall terminology of "Poor White Trash" as being due to the slaves who looked upon the "po white folks" as inferior to themselves.

A chief idiocyncasy was their propensity "to build their pine-pole cabins among the sterile sand hills, or in the very heart of the dismal solitude of the burr-oak or pine barrens." An anecdote told by an overseer who had spent some time among the Sandhillers and had persuaded a juvenile member to accompany him into the nearest alluvial bottoms illustrated this peculiarity:

. . . So soon as the juvenile Bobtail reached the open country his eyes began to dilate, and his whole manner and expression indicated a bewilderment and uneasiness. "Bedadseized!" exclaimed he at last, "ef this yere ked'ntry haint got nary sign ov er tree! How in thunder does does folks live down yere? By G-o-r-j! this beats all that Uncle Snipes tell about Carlina. Tell yer what, I'M goin' ter make tracks fur dad's—yer heer my horn toot!" And he did make tracks for dad's, sure enough.²⁷

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 237-238.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 259.

Another trait of the "poor whites" as seen by Hundley was that they "are about the laziest two-legged animals that walk erect on the face of the Earth." He described their motions as slow, their speech as a sickening drawl, and their thoughts and ideas as creeping along at a snail's pace. Hundley recollected an anecdote of a gentleman who was traveling through a section of the country peopled by Sandhillers on a cold wintry day when came upon "a squad of great strapping lazy bumpkins on the side of the road in a woods, sitting all huddled up and shivering around the smoulering remains of what had once been a fire." The chilled traveler, thinking it prudent to stop and warm himself before continuing, asked why they had allowed the fire to burn so low. The answer: they were "afeared they mout git too cold pickin' up sticks!" After gathering sufficient dry wood to build a fire and warm himself the traveler rode on his way, "leaving the great loutish clowns quarreling among themselves, as to which one of them was entitled to the *warmest side* of the fire!"²⁸

Physically the Sandhillers were described as lank, lean, angular, bony, of sallow complexion, awkward manners, and flaxen or carrot-colored hair. Mentally, Hundley stated, they were characterized by stupidity or dullness which almost surpassed belief. The women, prolific and snuff-dipping, soon lost all trace of youthful freshness and became "even more intolerable than the men" by age thirty. Hundley felt that the Sandhillers presented "in the main a very pitiable sight to the truly benevolent, as well as a ludicrous one to those who are mirthfully disposed."²⁹

Various other folk characters were enumerated by Hundley. Among them were the "Model Clerk" who "will swear that black is white, or white is black, nor wince once while he does it either" and who "learns to read a customer the moment he or she enters the store," and the "Model Storekeeper" who "tries very hard to free himself of certain little tell-tale habits, which tradespeople sometimes unfortunately contact in the 'shop'" in attempting to project himself as a gentleman, and who "prides

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 263.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 264.

himself upon his superiority to other members of the middle class, partly because he thinks the life of a farmer or mechanic quite degrading, and that of a storekeeper the *ne plus ultra* of ton and respectability" and "partly because he has cheated and swindled them so long, that he very naturally concludes they are but dull common sort of people as compared to a person of his own wonderful 'cuteness.'"³⁰

The designation "Southern Yankee" was used by Hundley to identify the type of person who is devoid of any principles "unless you accept the principle of making money and saving it when it is made." The cognomen "Yankee" did not apply to persons who were natives of New England but signified the "shrewd, sharp, chaffering, oily-tongued, soft-sawdering, inquisitive, money-making, money-saving, and money-worshipping individual" whether residing on banks of the Hudson or the Mississippi.³¹

Another of Hundley's folk characters was the "Whang Doodle" parson. Parsons of this order were described as "illiterate and dogmatic, and blessed with a nasal twang which could do no discredit to New England." Further description advised they "very seldom know anything about their Bibles, but, . . . seem to exert themselves to ignore all the facts and precepts of the Gospel of Jesus Christ as revealed in the Sacred Scriptures" and not infrequently mistook animal excitement for holy ecstasy and "often entertain many very absurd ideas in regard to Christianity."³²

Hundley's description of the folk characteristics in the life about him provided interesting and insightful vignettes of the identifying manners, characteristics, attitudes, and folkways of the people who populated the ante-bellum South. Many of them are still recognizable, and their aspirations, foibles, and characteristics are a familiar component of the human state irrespective of time and culture. The scenery has somewhat changed—it has modernized, mechanized, industrialized, electrified—but the actors are plying phenomenologically similar roles, and many are recognizable in the life about us today.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 107, 109-110.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 131-136.

³² *Ibid.*, 218.

SLAVERY IN THE 1850's:
THE RECOLLECTIONS OF AN ALABAMA UNIONIST

By

Walter F. Peterson

Montgomery, Alabama, may have been the birthplace of the Confederacy, but not all of its citizens shared the dominant views toward the institution of slavery during the decade prior to the Civil War. One family that did not conform to the prevailing social and economic patterns was that of George Richardson who moved from western Georgia in 1848 to settle near Tuskegee in Macon County, Alabama.

During the war between the states the Richardson family embraced the Union cause. Wade Hampton Richardson, who fled Alabama to enlist in the Union army and subsequently a successful businessman in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, in 1880's recorded his recollections of life in ante bellum Alabama. As a member of a family that did not conform to the Southern beliefs and customs of that day his observations, particularly in relation to the differences in attitudes and practices within the dominant white group toward the Negro slave, are of continuing interest. The manuscript was made available through the courtesy of the late Mrs. William A. Bowers of Milwaukee, daughter of Wade Richardson.

* * * *

Slavery¹

When I was eight years old Negroes were introduced into our neighborhood, as house servants and field hands, and as my father needed help on the farm while his children were in school, he became an employer of Negro labor under contracts with their masters and continued to employ them up to 1860

¹ In editing the manuscript those words, phrases and sentences that Wade Richardson crossed over with his own pen have been deleted. Those additions noted in the margin have been included. Otherwise, spelling and punctuation remain as they stand in the manuscript.

at which time, owing to the death of my grandmother Richardson, through purchase he became the owner of three slaves, a man, his wife and son of about my own age. Father had always been opposed to slavery, and altho he employed slaves on the farm, his treatment of them was always most humane. His mother came into possession of a Negro girl without deliberation and through pity. She happened to attend a country fair in Georgia very early in her married life, and there witnessed an auction sale of Negroes that broke up an entire family—the father was sold to a planter who shipped him to Mississippi, the mother was bought by a trader for a planter in another state and various children sold to other strangers, and at last a three year old girl was left that nobody wanted who cried so bitterly when her mother was wrested from her that my grandmother bid her in, took her home, raised her to womanhood, trained her in cooking, sewing and housekeeping and never permitted her to bear the burdens of the ordinary field hand.

This girl, Maria, in course of time married and bore five or six children. At my grandfather's death in the early fifties, these children were divided among such of his children as chose them—my father refusing to own a slave. My grandmother was given Maria and her youngest son and her dower interest in the real estate of my grandfather. The husband of Maria belonged to a farmer near by and grandmother by selling her dower interest was able to purchase Jack, Maria's husband. It was at this period that my father for love and affection deeded his mother a life interest in part of our farm and hither she came bringing the three Negroes with her. They were well trained servants and enjoyed all the freedom of white folks, except mobility to leave the place without a written pass. The use of the land was free and as all they required to do was to support grandmother comfortably, and she had few and simple wants, they led a very respectable existence, envied by many of the poor whites, while slaveholders thought they were given too many liberties and wore too good clothes to be examples for their own slaves.

Besides, Jack could read his Bible—how he learned to read I never knew—and was looked up to by the less favored blacks. He employed me to teach his son to read and write—a violation

of the law of the land subjecting me or my father who was responsible for my conduct to a fine of \$500. Of course as soon as father was notified by the authorities I was forbidden to continue the work; but the boy had advanced so far—he could read and write by this time—that with the aid of books I loaned to him he continued his studies for a time. His knowledge of writing, however, was a source of trouble for whenever caught away from home with the regular written pass in his possession, he was suspected of having written it himself. On one such occasion, while on a fishing expedition with one of my brothers he was seized by the “patrollers” as they were called—a body of white men who acted as deputy sheriffs—and led out to be whipped. My brother, a lad of fifteen armed with a rifle in the use of which he was even then an expert interfered, got a bead on the leader who halted further proceedings.

Now many slaveholders were kind masters, and granted their slaves all the liberty the local laws allowed. I remember one planter owning twenty or thirty slaves, moved to a city where his children could have the benefit of such schools and churches and who allowed a trusty slave to take entire charge of the place. Thus this place was run for several years, the master visiting it from time to time to give advice and to supervise harvesting the crops. This plantation was surrounded by dense swamps which abounded in many wild animals that were very destructive farm pests. For this reason the trusty slave was provided with a gun and ammunition with which to kill squirrels and other destructive animals. But in 1859 after John Brown's disastrous raid on Harpers Ferry, the people of the South became alarmed, and the owner of this plantation as a protection for his own slaves decided it was best to have a white man on the place. Knowing one of my uncles to be a humane man, he employed him as overseer. In the meantime, knowledge of the trusty slave having a gun in his possession induced the patrollers one night to make a raid. They searched the Negro's cabin and arrested him and began preparations to give him a flogging. My uncle interfered, which resulted in a hand to hand encounter in which the Negro escaped; but my uncle overpowered by the posse was dragged before the nearest justice of the peace for trial. After stating his side of the controversy he was bound over to be tried at the next term of court for

permitting a Negro to have a gun. This circumstance is mentioned to show the condition of things at that date.

Folk Lore

Whoever has read Joel Chandler Harris's stories of Uncle Remus and others of his will appreciate those books more when they know they are simply a clever collection of real stories that in my boyhood were told and retold to the young children. Often have I settled down near the stool where the old Negro named Jack, who I fancy was the original Uncle Remus, and heard him relate all the fables of "Bre'r Rabbit" and the "other beastes" which a generation later I found in book form by Joel Chandler Harris—a man to whom the world is indebted for preserving the ancient folk lore of the plantation Negro much of which may have been brought from Africa.

Christmas Festivities

Among the Negroes every holiday was a day of jollification. Christmas day was a special day for feasting and drinking. Then it was that the masters disposed good cheer, by supplying all with liberal libations of eggnog, and turkey dinners were the order of the day. The merry making began in the early light of the morning, and the darky who could first wish his master a merry Christmas received the choicest present—yet all received some gift from "Massa or Missus." The day was given up to a round of calls from cabin to cabin on the plantation ending with a dance at night. It was also a time for colored swains and dusky maidens who embraced the occasion to appear before the assembled multitude, and plead their vows of fealty to each other in the presence of their masters, and without further ceremonies began wedded life. Later, the Negro preacher in imitation of his white brother, became the minister, before whom vows were made and who pronounced them man and wife with many benedictions.

It is sad to reflect that these unions were often unceremoniously broken by the financial conditions of masters, who being in need of money often sold one of the contracting parties to be shipped off to a distant section of the country. Sometimes a woman thus separated from the father of her child refused to mate again, and thus stopped bearing slaves, which so angered

the master that on the first opportunity she too was sold to the slave trader. In one case that came directly under my observation, the man belonging to a different owner was sold and separated from his wife whose constancy kept her barren for years, till her own master sought and found the man working on a plantation in a distant state, bought him and brought him back to live with his wife, restoring the family relation with happy results; but such cases were rare to my knowledge.

Religious Observances

It is a curious commentary on the system of slavery practiced in the South that masters were most fervent in the profession of the Christian religion, and until the growth of great plantations which separated master and slave were most insistent on the Negro attending divine services where from holy word slaves were admonished to be obedient to their masters as one of the indispensable requisites for the salvation of their souls. Masters held family prayers at which house servants were required to be present, and an example set for the Negro preacher to conduct similar meetings in the cabins. Gradually, however, with the growth of slavery the Negroes were left to their own methods of worship, being occasionally addressed by the white preacher who visited the parish.

In the cotton growing districts, there were two vacations, one at Christmas lasting a week and one in July or August "when the crops were laid by" meaning the close of the tilling of the land, then the short period of waiting for the harvest to begin. This mid summer vacation was generally utilized for camp meetings for both whites and blacks. The camp ground that I remember was two miles from our house—which was patronized by all the people within a range of ten or fifteen miles. These camp meetings generally lasted a week or ten days, and were a source of pleasure and amusement to everybody. The meeting place was provided with logs for seats, and an arbor of brush for a roof to protect from the sun covering the arena from 50 to 100 ft. square. Later a building was erected in its place. Outside of this arena there was a space fifty to 100 ft. wide to the tents set up around the square to accommodate those who came for the weeks stay. A similar camp ground

for the Negroes was laid out nearby, both being under the supervision of voluntary guards. Of course around these camps were always found peddlers vending their wares, and the usual fakirs. But there were regular periods for service, and during these periods the best of order preserved.

However, at night after the last service there was always opportunity for the curious to prowl around to see what was going on in different parts of the camps. My curiosity often led me over to the Negro camp ground where I could witness the colored folks in their ardent and boisterous way "wrestle with the Lord." After loud and long exhortations of the leader who succeeded each impressive sentence with wonderful jesticulations, I have seen the whole mass upon their feet swaying in unison as they repeated in monotone:²

² This camp-meeting song is found in its entirety in *Uncle Remus, His Songs and His Sayings*, by Joel Chandler Harris, (New York, 1921), pp. 184-186. The fact that the version in the recollections of Wade Richardson corresponds so closely to that version first published by Joel Chandler Harris in 1880 would lend credibility to Richardson's role as an acute observer of ante bellum society in Alabama.

Oh, de worril is roun' end de worril is wide-
 Lord! 'member dese chillun in de morning'-
 Hit's a mighty long ways up de mountain side,
 En dey ain't no place for dem sinners fer ter hide,
 En dey ain't no place whar sin kin abide,
 W'en de Lord shill come in de mornin'!
 Look up en look aroun',
 Fling yo' burden on de groun'
 Hit's a gitten' mighty close on ter mornin'!
 Smoove away sin's frown-
 Retch up en git de crown,
 W'at de Lord will fetch in de morning'!

De han' er ridem'shun, hit's hilt out ter you-
 Lord! 'member dem sinners in de mornin'!
 Hit's a mighty pashent han', but de days is but few,
 W'en Satun, he'll come a demandin' un his due,
 En de stiff-neck sinners 'll be smotin' al fru-
 Oh, you better git ready for de mornin'!
 Look up en set yo' face
 Todes de green hills er grace
 'Fo' de sun rises up in de mornin'-
 Oh, you better change yo' base,
 Hits yo' soul's las' race
 Fer de glory dat's a comin' in de mornin'!

"O de worril is roun and de worril is wide
 Lord! 'member dese chillun in de mornin
 Hits a mighty long ways up de mountain side
 En dey ain't no place for dem sinners for ta hide
 En dey ain't no place whar sin can abide
 When de Lord shall come in de mornin
 Look up and look aroun
 Fling your burden on the groun'
 Hits getting mighty close onto mornin
 Move away sins frown—
 Retch up and git de crown

What de Lord will fetch in the mornin."

By the time they had reached the next to the last line they
 were in such a frenzy that with hands and arms extended to
 "Retch up and get de crown" many fell prostrate quivering in
 every limb: then they had got religion, and the devil was being
 driven out, the crowd belaboring each other and swining this
 camp meeting song —

"De hand er redemption, hits helt out to you
 Lord member dem sinners in de mornin
 W'en satan, he'll come a demandin un his due
 En de stiff neck sinners 'll be smoting all fru
 Oh you better get ready for the mornin
 Oh you allers be wrong
 Twel you choose tar belong
 Ter de Master wats a comin in the mornin."

Many of those who "got religion" in this way were for
 hours in a state of coma and had to be carted away in this con-

De farmer gits ready w'en de lan's all plowed
 Fer ter sow dem seeds in de morning'-
 De sperrit may be puny en de flesh may be proud,
 But you better cut loose fum de scoffin' crowd,
 En jine dese Christuns w'at's a cryin' out loud
 Fer de Lord fer ter come in de mornin'!
 Shout loud en shout long,
 Let de ekkoes ans'er strong,
 W'en de sin rises up in de mornin'!
 Oh, you allers will be wrong
 Twel you choose ter belong
 Ter de Marster w'at's a comin' in de mornin'!

dition. Several Negroes that I knew were under this spell for days afterward, and went about their labor in the fields shouting and singing and praying and fasting until masters had to interfere, and stop the singing of those who remained rational till the excitement had subsided.

This frenzy resulting in coma was quite frequent with the emotional among the white worshippers. But to see half of a congregation whether white or black sprawling on the ground in a half dazed condition never impressed me as anything I wanted to imitate, hence I always refused to answer the call to the mourners bench, and grew up in the language of my neighbors, a heathen infidel. I have no doubt my attitude and that of my older brothers, whose example I followed, was largely influenced by my father who, raised in a Methodist family, rebelled against its creed as too narrow for him and embraced Universalism because it promised salvation to all the sons of man and appealed to reason rather than to emotion.

The Negro Slave in 1860

As slavery grew, the homestead with its few acres cultivated by the proprietor and his family with the assistance of a few slaves gave way to the more extensive plantation of hundred of acres under one overseer cultivated almost wholly if not entirely, by slaves. On these plantation were to be seen the social side of slavery at its worst. The master living in the city was an absentee landlord, whose principal interest was to secure the largest return possible from his investment in lands, mules and Negroes. The overseer, a white man, held his place dependent upon results he obtained—hence he became the slave driver, the crack of whose whip has often figured in history and fiction.

The overseer was generally selected for his ability to cow and manage the slaves and incidently for his knowledge of farming. He was generally selected from the middle or lower class of whites, and his life was most debasing, unless he was a humane and moral man. The life of the Negro was full of comedy and pathos. He was as care free as the mule he drove for food and clothing, such as it was, was provided for him and his pleasures were confined to those of physical existence.

His food was parcelled out to him in daily or weekly rations—the usual monthly allowance being a bushel of meal or 10 or 15 pounds of bacon to each adult—other food he had to procure from the garden. As for clothes, the yearly allowance stipulated in the hire of a slave was one woolen blanket, two full suits of clothes, one hat and a pair of shoes. Whatever else he needed he had to earn from over work. Frequently, he was permitted to have a patch of ground which he made into a garden, raised melons that he could sell for a few cents, and thus earn enough to buy any additional clothing he needed.

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The pagination in Volume XXX, No. 1 and No. 2, was inadvertantly started on page 1. Numbering of pages in Nos. 3 and 4 continues from No. 2. In order to clarify this situation, references to pages in No. 1 bear a superscription. All other pages numbers refer to Nos. 2 through 4

—A—

"A Lincoln "Drama" From The Deep South"	77-80
"A Stranger Indeed in a Strange Land"	61
Abeka	44 ¹
Abisa	44 ¹
Acayabe	35 ¹
Achonchuba	40 ¹
Achucuja	45 ¹

<i>Advocate, Huntsville</i>	51 ¹
<i>Alabama Journal</i>	20 ¹
Alabama Platform	31
<i>Ala. State Journal</i>	169
Alabama, University of	21, 22, 23, 24, 154
<i>Alert</i>	127, 129
<i>Alfred Robb</i>	56
Allen, W. W.	157
Alpatacjuman	2 ¹ , 4 ¹ , 37 ¹
<i>An Essay on the Discovery of America by Madoc ap Owen</i> <i>Gwynedd in the Twelfth Century</i>	12 ¹ , 13 ¹
Anchalemastabe	40 ¹
Andrews, G. Garnett	171
Ankajula	40 ¹
Antihajuman	42 ¹
Anunchabe	40 ¹
Apocyuhabe	43 ¹
Archibald's school	153
Armstrong, Zella	13 ^a
Arthur, Chester A.	96
Atacabemingo	41 ^a
Athens, Ala.	68, 69
Atkins, John D. C.	93
Atonajuman	40 ¹
Atugula	44 ¹
Austill, Jere.	157
d'Avezac, Auguste	20 ¹

—B—

Baine, David W.	27, 35, 36, 37
<i>Baltic</i>	127, 131, 132, 144
Bank, Nathaniel P.	125
Banks <i>[Edwin A.]</i>	155
Barren Warren, Ky.	63
Barrett, William H.	69 ¹
Bassett, Henry D.	130
Battle, Mrs. W, A.	174
Behacha	37 ¹
Bell, John	56 ¹ , 61 ¹
Beverley, Lucy	146, 147

Bibb, W. C.	176
Bingham, D. H.	52 ¹ , 53 ¹
Bird, Wm.	170
Birmingham	178, 179
<i>Birmingham News</i>	67 ¹
Biscun,	38 ¹
Black Padoucas	10 ¹ , 17 ¹
Blockade	115
Blount, James H.	93, 95, 193
<i>Boston Herald</i>	67 ¹
Boutelle, Charles A.	95, 110
Bowers, Mrs. William A.	219
Bowlegs, Billy, (See Bowles, William Augustus)	
Bowles, William Augustus	9 ¹ , 10 ¹ , 11 ¹ , 12 ¹ , 13 ¹ , 16 ¹
Bowling Green, Ky.	63, 64
Bradley, Joseph C.	57 ¹
Brannon, Peter A.	14 ¹
Breckenridge, John C.	32, 56
de Briey, Count, Minister of Foreign Affairs	23 ¹ , 26 ¹
<i>British Queen</i>	23 ¹ , 24 ¹ , 25 ¹
Brooke gun	137
Bryan, William Jennings	73 ¹
Bucatele	45 ¹
Bucfalaya	42 ¹
Bucfuka	40 ¹
Buchanan, Franklin	128, 130, 131, 134, 135, 136, 138, 139, 140, 142, 143, 156
Buell, Gen. D. C.	49
Bulger, Michael J.	57 ¹
Bullock, Charles H.	199
Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands for Alabama	55 ¹ , 58 ¹
Burnell, Richard	11 ¹
Buttahatchie Creek	73
Byrd, William II	15, 16

—C—

Cacchajupaye	44 ¹
Cachonimastabe	42 ¹
Cachononjeka	34 ¹

Calhoun, John C.	29 ¹
Callins, Ryland Rudolph	174
Canalechiabe	34 ¹
Canalechijabe	36 ¹
Canlabacha	45 ¹
Carter, Robert	15
Catlin, George	17 ¹
Cenatlo	45 ¹
Centre	27 ¹
Chacoje	44 ¹
Chakaleche	34 ¹
Chalmers, Gen. James R.	171
Chambliss, N. B.	175
Chanackajuman	37 ¹
Chandler, Hatchett	14 ¹
Chapanchabe	36 ¹
Chaphemataha	41 ¹
Charleston Library Society	17
Chicachaje	39 ¹
Chicachaye	45 ¹
Chicahajuman	36 ¹
Chicahmastabe	43 ¹
Chickasaw, Ala.	52
Chicupajuman	37 ¹
Childs, H. L. (Fred)	199
Chilitajuman	35 ¹ , 39 ¹ , 42 ¹
Chinese tariff	71 ¹
Chomontacale	37 ¹
Chomontakale	42 ¹
Christmas Festivities	222
Chucataastabe	39 ¹
Chusastenantela	44 ¹
Chuquismastabe	41 ¹
Clanton, Col. James H.	59, 157
Clanton's Mounted Rifles	176
Clay, C. C., Sr.	174
Clay, Henry	30 ¹
Clemens, Jeremiah	51 ¹
Clemson, Thomas G.	29 ¹ , 30 ¹
Cleveland, Grover	97, 98

Cloud, N. B.	174
Comeggs, Wm.	176
<i>Commercial Register</i> , Mobile	19 ¹
Concha	41 ¹
Conchinantela	38 ¹
<i>Conestoga</i>	49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 56
Confederacy, Speculation	118
Price control inflation	119
Inflation	117
Financial policies	118
Railroad	120-123
Manufacturing	123
Exemption acts	123
Confederate Currency	117, 119
Cotton loans	114, 115, 116
Diplomacy	114
“Confederate Defenses and Union Gunboats on the Tennessee River: A Federal Raid Into Northwest Alabama”	39-60
Confederate finance	112
Connelly, Mr. T. L.	85, 111
Conscription, Bureau of	124
Cooper, Thomas B.	27, 28
Cooper, William	44
Cotton embargo	113, 116
Cotton Gin Port	73
Cox, S. S. “Sunset”	95
Crochran (see George Croghan)	17 ¹
Croghan, George	11 ¹ , 17 ¹
Cumberland City, Ky.	62, 63

—D—

David	7 ¹
Davis, George T.	92
Davis, Jefferson	112, 113, 120
Deacon, Richard	6 ¹ , 14 ¹ , 15 ¹ , 16 ¹ , 17 ¹
DeBow, J. B. D.	19, 20
Decatur, Ala.	60
Deshler, David	44
Dezendorf, Joh. F.	93, 94, 95, 109

Dickson, William	44
Dixon, Capt. Joseph	45, 46, 47
Dog River	14 ¹
Douglas, Stephen A.	30, 56 ¹ , 61 ¹
Drake, George M.	194
<i>Droit de Tarifs Differentiels</i>	28 ¹
Drwyndwn, Iorwerth	7 ¹
Dubose, John W.	145, 146, 178, 180
<i>Dunbar</i>	56
Dupre, Col. L. J.	171
Dykous, Dennis	164, 168

—E—

East, Tom	73
<i>Eastport</i>	52, 57
Ebanucjelabe	40 ¹
Ebitabuguluchis	43 ¹
Edward Broken-nose, See Iorwerth Drwyndwn	
Edwards, Jonathan	53 ¹
Eggleston, John R.	140
Elaphele	39 ¹
Elastabe	40 ¹
Elatalajuman	34 ¹
Elkton, Ala.	68
Ellis, E. John	92, 93, 94
Erlanger, Emile	116
Erlanger loan	115
Escaribacha	34 ¹
Espanajupaye	40 ¹
Estonahacho	42 ¹ , 43 ¹
Estonajuman	35 ¹ , 44 ¹
Estonakjupaye	41 ¹ , 45 ¹
Estonaque	42 ¹
Estotejuman	44 ¹
Etolambe	39 ¹
Etotejuman	36 ¹ , 41 ¹
<i>Eufaula News</i>	187
Evans, Augusta J.	138, 143
Evans, John	12 ¹ , 16 ¹
Everett, Edward	22 ¹

Falochemastabe	42 ¹
Fanakemastabe	41 ¹
Farrand, Ebenezer	130, 131, 133
Faustin II,	151
Federal Reserve Act	66 ¹
Felitamou	43 ¹
Few, Ignatius A.	183
Fichiclagana	44 ¹
Filson, John	9 ¹
Fiquet, D. D.	169
First Alabama Cavalry Regiment	59
Fisher, George W.	134
Fitzpatrick, Benjamin	157
Fleming, Walter L.	185
Florence, Ala.	48, 54, 55, 56, 60
<i>Florence Gazette</i>	54
<i>Florida</i>	127, 129
Folk Lore	222
Fontaine, Edward	61, 62
Foote, Comdr. A. C. <i>Andrew (Commodore)</i>	49 , 50 #2
Fordney-McCumber Tariff Act of 1922	75 ¹
Forney, Gen. Jno. H.	158
Forrest, Gen. N. B.	158
Forsyth, John	185, 187
Fort Donelson	40, 50, 118
Fort Heiman	47, 49
Fort Henry	40 ¹ , 41 ¹ , 47 ¹ , 49 ¹ , 50 ¹ , 53 ¹
Fort Morgan marker	14 ¹
Foster, C. M.	170
Foster, Thomas J.	43, 44
Foundry	132
Four Power Treaty	72 ¹ , 73 ¹
Fourteenth Amendment	57 ¹ , 60 ¹ , 61 ¹ , 64 ¹
Freedmen's Bureau, See Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands	
French, B. F., library	19
Funding act	117

—G—

Gadsden Times	186
Gaines	129
Galloway, Col. Matt C.	171
Garth, Genl. Jesse Winston	69, 71
Garth, William Willis,	71
Garvin, Maj. John S.	47
Georgia, University of	21
Gettysburg	118
Gift, George W.	140, 142
Gilchrist, James G.	34
Gilmer, Francis Walker	17
Gilmer, Maj. J. F.	44, 46, 47
Glascock, John	177
Glasgow, Ky.	63
Glass, Carter,	68 ¹ , 69 ¹ 71 ¹
Goblet, Count General	26 ¹ , 27 ¹ , 29 ¹ , 30 ¹
Goode, Dr. Thomas H.	85, 89
Gorgas, Josiah	41
Granade, Ray	85, 181
Grant's Pass	129, 141
Grant, Lon	186
Grant, Gen. U. S.	49
Greene Springs School	153
Guild, Dr. James	170
Gwennan Gorn	15 ¹ , 16 ¹
Gwin, Lt. Comdr. William	49
Gwynedd, Owen	6 ¹ , 7 ¹

—H—

Haight, Samuel	23 ¹
Hajulupa	37 ¹
Hakluyt, Richard	7 ¹
Haldimand, General Frederick	11 ¹
Halleck, Gen. Fitzgreen	49, 60
Halsell, Willie D.	3, 61
Hardee, Gen. William J.	175
Harding, Warren G.	65 ¹ , 66 ¹
Hargrove, A. C.	172
Harris, Isham	40, 42

Harvard University	74
Hawkins, Benjamin	7
picture	5
Hayneville	29
Hays, Jesse	187, 188, 189
Heacchajuman	37 ¹
Hebacalabe	35 ¹
Heiman, Col. A. A.	42
Helatalajupaye	35 ¹
Helatalemanstabe	36 ¹
Hemaltaha	39 ¹
Herbert, Hilary A.	92, 95, 98, 99, 100, 101, 107, 109
photograph	87
Hester, Joseph G.	199
Hilliard, Henry Washington	21 ¹
Hillman, P. A.	199
Hochinchimastabe	42 ¹
Hogue, Mary Powell	27
Hollins, George N.	129
Holmes, Jack D. L.	3 ¹
Hopper, A. J.	56
Howel	7 ¹
Hughes, Col. A. A.	47
Humphreys, David C.	52 ¹
Hundley, Daniel R.	203
Hunt, A. A.	29
Hunt, William H.	91, 92
Huntsville, Ala.	130, 132, 133, 135, 136, 144
Hupeyantantela	44 ¹ , 45 ¹
Hupuyahacho	45 ¹
Hurst, M. B.	36

—I—

Inglistamanahan	36 ¹
Instajupaye	41 ¹
<i>Iron Age</i>	178
Ironclad gunboats	127, 130, 131
Ivey, Thomas	199

—J—

Jackson, Andrew	20 ¹ , 149
James, J. F.	182
Jefferson, Thomas	16, 21
Johnson, Gen. Albert S.	39
Johnson, Evans C.	3 ¹ , 65 ¹
Johnson, Kenneth R.	3, 39
Johnston, Gen.	44, 46, 58
Johnston, James D.	127, 133, 140
Johnston, Joseph E.	144
Jogulaya Kabe	42 ¹
Jones, Catesby	134, 136
Jordan, William C.	194
Jorge	45 ¹
Juatonlula	42 ¹
Jucapasa	40 ¹
Jucchannejacho	37 ¹
Jucchayemanstabe	34 ¹
Juchijuman	35 ¹
Juchinchajupaye	42 ¹
Juctacchanancbe	35 ¹
Jujejugula	37 ¹
Julactajupaye	42 ¹
Julactajuman	37 ¹
<i>Julian H. Smith</i>	53
Julusmastabe	44 ¹
Jumabe	45 ¹
Junabe	45 ¹
Junanhekabe	41 ¹
Jupajulus	42 ¹
Jupayemastabe	44 ¹
Jusacjunichiya	40 ¹
Juyhajacha	37 ¹
Juyupajuman	44 ¹

—K—

Knights of the White Camelia	199
Ku Klux Klans	164, 174, 181, 197, 198, 199, 200

—L—

Lane, A. O.	178
Lapsley, J. W.	53 ¹
Latonoche	40 ¹
League of Nations	66 ¹
Lee, Robert E.	121
Legare, Hugh Swinton	20 ¹ , 21 ¹
Leopold, I,	20 ¹ , 23 ¹
Le Vert, Madame	143
<i>Lexington</i>	49, 51, 52, 53, 56
"Libraries in the Ante Bellum South"	15-26
Lieber, Francis	25
Livingston, L. A.	77
Livingston, Leonidas F.	106
Lodge, Henry Cabot	68, 110
Loomis, J. C.	169, 174
Looney, Col. Robert F.	58
Lord Aberdeen	26 ¹
Lord Liverpool	26 ¹
Louis Philippe	24 ¹ , 28 ¹
Loyal League	184, 197, 199
Lucfejata	44 ¹

—M—

McAdoo, William Gibbs	68 ¹ , 109
McAlpine, Solomon	172, 173 ¹
McConnell, W. K.	175
McGown, Henry	168
McGuire, Moses	169
McKee, Robert	167
McLaughlin, Thos. M. A.	178
McMillan, Benton	102
McRae, Colin J.	127, 130, 131, 132, 136
Macon (Georgia) <i>Telegraph</i>	72 ¹
Mad Dog River	14 ¹
Madoc	6 ¹ , 7 ¹ , 8 ¹ , 9 ¹ , 12 ¹ , 13 ¹ , 14 ¹ , 17 ¹
<i>Madoc and the Discovery of America</i>	14 ¹
"Madogwys Forever! The Present State of the Madoc Controversy"	6-17 ¹
Mahan, Alfred Thayer	90, 92, 100, 101, 110, 143

<i>Maine</i>	97
Malata	40 ¹
Mali, G. T.	20 ¹
Mallory, Stephen R.	42, 128, 130, 134, 137, 138, 144, 156
<i>Manchester Guardian</i>	68 ¹
Mandan Indians	17 ¹
Marion <i>Commonwealth</i>	164
Martin, John M.	171
Mason, George	15
Maury, Gen. D. H.	138, 143
Maxcy, Mr. Virgil	21 ¹ , 22 ¹
Meek, A. B.	32
Meek, B. F.	174
Meek, Sam M., Col.	171
Memminger, Christopher G.	115
Memphis Press	67 ¹
Men of Justice	199
Mestechico	34 ¹
Mexican War	150
Meyer	104, 105, 106, 107
Mingoholiso	45 ¹
Mingojabasa	34 ¹
Mingojuman	39 ¹
Mingopulcus	34 ¹ , 39 ¹ , 41 ¹
Mintojalaya	36 ¹
<i>Mobile Register and Advertiser</i>	185, 192, 193
<i>Mobile Republican</i>	195
Money, Hernando de Soto	105, 107
Mongulachaescatang	40 ¹
Monroe, W. O.	164
<i>Montgomery Daily Advertiser</i>	192, 193
<i>Montgomery Journal</i>	69 ¹
Montgomery Mounted Rifles	157
Moore, Albert B.	14 ¹ , 17 ¹ , 33, 46
Morgan	129, 139
Murrell, John A.	66
<i>Muscle</i>	57
Muscle Shoals	40, 53

—N—

Nachobahacho	43 ¹
Nachubajuanya	35 ¹
Nacjumanhacho	39 ¹
Nanjulacha	45 ¹
Nanjulismastabe	44 ¹
Nanjumanstabe	34 ¹
Nanpilimastabe	40 ¹
Nashville	66
<i>Nashville</i>	132, 134, 135, 136, 137, 144
Natelaschanyajuman	39 ¹
NeSmith, S. P.	31
New Orleans	18 ¹ , 118
New Orleans Commercial Library	19
New Orleans Public Library Society	18
New York <i>Times</i>	67 ¹
New York <i>Tribune</i>	74 ¹
Nine Power Treaty	73 ¹
Norman, J. G.	56
Noscobo	43 ¹
Nucpalajuman	41 ¹

—O—

Oates, William C.	99, 102
Oconastota	13 ¹ , 16 ¹
Okacaniabe	44 ¹
Okatalaya	37 ¹
Okelusa	43 ¹
"Old Dicks"	173, 176, 177
Olitacha	43 ¹
Olitahaastabe	35 ¹
Opaye-de-mingo	5 ¹
Order of Peace	199
Orrick, John C.	183
Oskelagana	34 ¹
Owen, William	9 ¹ , 10 ¹
Owsley, Frank L., Jr.	3, 7

—P—

Padoucas	9 ¹ , 10 ¹ , 12 ¹
----------------	--

Palmer, A. Mitchell	65 ¹
Panachajuman	40 ¹
Panchabajuele	43 ¹
Panchinandeta	34 ¹
Panchinantela	44 ¹
Panchonjekabe	41 ¹
Pante	42 ¹
Parsons, Lewis E.	52 ¹ , 53 ¹ , 54 ¹ , 56 ¹ , 192
Patton, Gov. R. M.	56, 157 ¹
Payejuman	39 ¹ , 45 ¹
Payemingo	40 ¹
Peck, David L.	175
Peck, E. W.	171
Peckham, George, <i>A True Reporte of the Late Discoveries</i>	7 ¹
Pelechihabe	40 ¹
Peters, Thomas M.	52 ¹
Peterson, Dr. Walter F.	85, 219
Phelps, Lt. Comdr. Leyard S.	49, 53, 54, 57
Phillips, Dr. Martin W.	17
<i>Phoenix</i>	169
Pierce, Mr. Joseph	134
Pikeville	72
Pillow, Gen. Gideon J.	44, 45
Pittsburgh Press	67 ¹
Pochajuman	34 ¹ , 35 ¹ , 36 ¹
Pochanchabe	35 ¹ , 41 ¹
Pochanchaja	34 ¹
Pochonchihabe	37 ¹
Pochonjeka	44 ¹
Pochontihabe	42 ¹
Polk, Gen. Leonidas K.	44, 59
Pophajuman	35 ¹
Porter, Sidney	135
Powel, Dr. David	7 ¹
Prentiss, S. S.	214
Preston, William	22 ¹
Public School Library of New Orleans	20
Pucchanacajuman	34 ¹ , 35 ¹
Pucchananhacho	35 ¹
Puchiestonabe	35 ¹

Puchimataha	35 ¹
Puchimataja	37 ¹
Puchinchijuman	34 ¹
Puchinmastabe	35 ¹ , 36 ¹ , 40 ¹ , 41 ¹
Pupayejuman	34 ¹
Puscustacale	37 ¹
Pusquejamingo	38 ¹

—R—

Randolph, Augusta Granberry	146
Randolph, Brett	146, 147, 157
Randolph, Edward B.	146
Randolph, John	16
Randolph, Robert C.	146, 147, 148
Plantation life	149
Randolph, Ryland	145, 146, 147, 150, 157, 201
amputation of leg	171
death of	180
war experiences	158-64
Randolph, Victor M.	128, 129, 130, 146, 147, 151, 152, 157
Rea, Robert R.	3 ¹ , 6 ¹
Reconstruction Acts of 1867	60 ¹ , 64 ¹
Religious Observances	223
Renfroe, Stephen S.	199
Rhay	165
Richards, J. DeForrest	173, 177
Richardson, George	219
Richardson, George	219
Richardson, Wade Hampton	18
Richmond Library Society	111
Richmond Riots	93
Robeson, George A.	72 ¹
Robinson, Joseph T.	100
Rogers, John H.	3, 15, 85, 203
Rogers, Tommy W.	3, 77
Rogers, William W.	132
Rolling mill	3 ¹ , 19 ¹
Rooney, Dr. John William, Jr.	22 ¹
<i>Roscius</i>	158
Rucker, Col. Edmund W.	59
Ruggles, Gen. Daniel	

de Rumigny, Marquis, French Ambassador	24 ¹
Russell, William Howard	142

—S—

Sactetamahan	36 ¹
St. Louis <i>Globe-Democrat</i>	67 ¹
<i>Sallie Wood</i>	57
Saltworks	157
<i>Sam Kirkman</i>	53
<i>Samuel Orr</i>	51
Saunders, James E.	43
Sayers, Joseph D.	100, 101, 107
Schurz, Carl	55 ¹
Schwab, John Christopher	117
Seibels, John J.	53 ¹ , 154, 155
Select Committee on Reconstruction	61 ¹
<i>Selma</i>	139
Senegahacha	35 ¹
Serreys, Baron	23 ¹
Settle, Thomas	109
Sevier, John	13 ¹ , 16 ¹
Seymour, Sir Hamilton	24
Shelby Iron Company	132
Shepherd,	169
Shirk, Lt. Comdr. James W.	49
Shorter, John Gill	133
Simpson, Ky.	65
Sims, William Gilmore	17
Sipsee Creek	73
"Slavery in the 1850's: The Recollections of an Alabama Unionist"	219-227
Smets, A. A.	17
Smith, Gen. Charles F.	49
Smith, Kirby	144
Smith, Col. W. R.	47, 55, 57
Smith, William H.	52, 62
South Carolina, College of	21, 22 ¹ , 24
"Southern Congressmen and the American Naval Revolution, 1880-1898"	89-110
Southey, Robert	12 ¹ , 15 ¹

Speer, Emory	94
Sprout, Harold	91
Sprout, Margaret	91
Stanley, Marcellus	22 ¹ , 24 ¹
Steele, L. D.	77
Stephens, Thomas	12 ¹ , 15 ¹
Stevenson	186
Still, Dr. William N., Jr.	85, 127
Stockdale, Thomas R.	104
Swayne, Wager T.	54 ¹ , 55 ¹
Sze, Alfred Sao-Ke	71 ¹ , 74 ¹

—T—

Tala	36 ¹
Talbott, J. Fred C.	107
Tamahanjuman	40 ¹
Tamahanmastabe	34 ¹
Tamanpuman	44 ¹
Tanampcheteka	34 ¹
Tanlepa	36 ¹
Tapenacchanya	36 ¹
Tapenacho	43 ¹
Tapenajuman	44 ¹
Tapenanchuakja	40 ¹
Tapenanhacho	44 ¹
Tarver, T. T.	157
Tasanucjupaye	43 ¹ , 45 ¹
Tascajuman	45 ¹
Tascananguchijuman	39 ¹
Tascananguchimastabe	40 ¹
Tascatapato	40 ¹ , 44 ¹
Taskaantiabe	42 ¹
Taskahanachabe	35 ¹
Taskajuman	42 ¹
Taskajuacaya	38 ¹
Taskanija	42 ¹
Taskecajacho	36 ¹
Tasquahamingo	45 ¹
Tasquemataha	40 ¹
Tattnall, Josiah	150, 153, 154

Tatulabe	45 ¹
Tax-in-kind	120
Taylor, Joseph W.	171, 172, 173, 175
Teapole	44 ¹
Techanan	36 ¹
Techobajeka	34 ¹
Tecumseh	13
<i>Tennessee</i>	132, 136, 137, 138, 143, 144
Tepanletihabe	43 ¹
<i>Texas</i>	97
"The Choctaws in 1795"	33-46 ¹
"The Confederate States Navy at Mobile, 1861 to August, 1864"	127-144
"The Cycle of Military and Economic Interests: A Theory of Confederate Defeat"	111-125
"The Diplomatic Mission of Henry Washington Hilliard to Belgium, 1842-1844"	19-31
Thomas, George H.	53 ¹ , 158
Thompson, Frederic I.	69 ¹
Ticachenantela	34 ¹
Tichamanstabe	45 ¹
Tichatlaysia	45 ¹
Tichujulacta	37 ¹ , 45 ¹
Tichujupaye	44 ¹
Tichumastabe	42 ¹
Tichumingo	44 ¹
Tijugulehenan	45 ¹
Tilghman, Gen. Lloyd ✓	40, 47, 49, 50
Tincabe	44 ¹
Tinctejuman	37 ¹
Tinskahetela	36 ¹
Tlupuyajuman	35 ¹ , 43 ¹
Tombecbe	42 ¹
Tombigbee	73 ¹
Tombigbee River Yard	135
Tona	44 ¹
Toombs, Bob	155
Torpedoes	41
"Tourro Free Library"	19
Tracy, Benjamin	100

Treaty of Berlin	68 ¹
Trousdale, B. B.	44
Tuctuculus	44 ¹
Tupajuman	35 ¹ , 41 ¹
Turner, Nat	184
<i>Tuscaloosa</i>	130, 132, 133, 135, 136, 144
<i>Tuskaloosa Blade</i>	175
<i>Tuskaloosa Independent Monitor</i>	145, 164, 168, 169, 171, 173
Twenty-Sixth Alabama Infantry	55
<i>Tyler</i>	39, 51, 52, 53
Tyler, John	21 ¹

—U—

“Underwood and Harding: A Bipartisan Friendship”	65-78 ¹
Underwood, Frederica Virginia	70 ¹
Underwood, Oscar W.,	65 ¹ , 69 ¹ , 71 ¹ , 74 ¹ , 75 ¹
“Unionist Efforts to Control Alabama Reconstruction, 1865-1867”	51-64 ¹
Union League of America	58 ¹ , 197
<i>Union Springs Times</i>	194
Upshur, Abel P.	26 ¹ , 28 ¹

—V—

Vaughan, Vernon Henry	169, 170, 171, 175, 176
Vesey, Denmark	184
Vicksburg	118
Victoria, Queen	26
de la Villebeuvre, Jean	46 ¹
“Violence: An Instrument of Policy in Reconstruction Alabama”	181-202
<i>Virginia</i>	130, 136
Virginia, University of	21

—W—

Walker, Brig. Gen. L. P.	58, 59 ²
Washington Conference	69 ¹
Watson, Elbert L.	27
Watts, Thomas Hill	77
Weakley Committee	45, 46, 47, 49, 56
Webb, Alexander	183

Webster, Daniel	22 ¹ , 23 ¹
Wentworth, "Long John"	194
Wheeler, Joseph W.	95, 101, 110
White, Alexander H.	200
White Indians, See Padoucas	
White Padoucas, See Padoucas	
Whitfield, H. S.	167
Whitthorne, Washington	90, 95
<i>Who Discovered America? The Amazing Story of Madoc</i>	13 ¹
Wiggins, Dr. Sarah Woolfolk	3 ¹ , 51 ¹ , 85, 145
Wilkinson, Theodore, S.	102
Williamson, James S.	34
Willing and Morris	11 ¹
Willing, James	11 ¹
Willing, Thomas	11 ¹
Williams, Dr. John	9 ¹
Wilson, John	177
Withers, Katherine Clay	174

—Y—

Yaganeachucuman	35 ¹
Yanabe	42 ¹
Yancey, Benjamin C.	154, 155
Yancey, William L.	30, 61 ¹ , 155
Yazu	41 ¹
Yematabe	45 ¹
Ylejupaque	43 ¹
Ylepatapo	36 ¹
Ymabe	34 ¹
Ynchajajuman	35 ¹
Ytejumabe	40 ¹
Ytejumastabe	45 ¹
Ytepichaco	43 ¹
Yuani	39 ¹

